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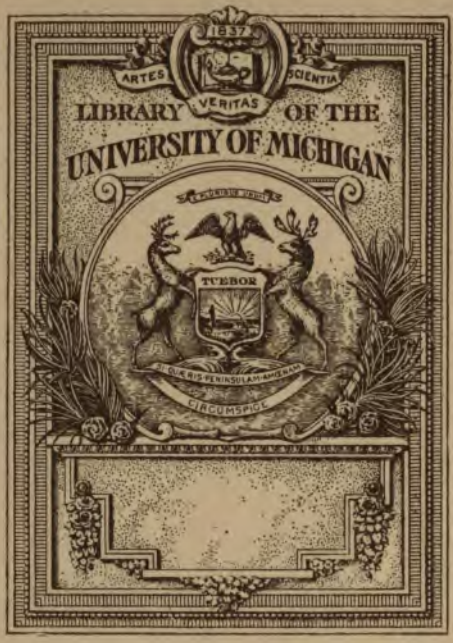
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POETRY
A MAGAZINE OF VERSE
VOLUME XVIII

Poetry

A Magazine of Verse

VOLUME XVIII

April - September, 1921

Edited by
Harriet Monroe

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April 1921

The Box of God
by Lew Sarett

Three Sonnets
by Arthur Ficke

Lee Wilson Dodd
Elinor Wylie

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To Mr. S. O. Levinson, for the Helen Haire Levinson Prize of two hundred dollars, to be awarded for the eighth time; and to the anonymous guarantor who will present, for the seventh time, a prize of one hundred dollars.

We feel that these prizes are a most valuable service to the art.

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Poetry
A Magazine of Verse

VOL. XVIII
NO. I

APRIL 1921

THE BOX OF GOD

I: BROKEN BIRD

O broken bird,
Whose whistling silver wings have known the lift
Of high mysterious hands, and the wild sweet music
Of big winds among the ultimate stars!—
The black-robed curés put your pagan Indian
Soul in their white man's House of God, to lay
Upon your pagan lips new songs, to swell
The chorus of amens and hallelujahs.
In simple faith and holy zeal, they flung
Aside the altar-tapestries, that you
Might know the splendor of God's handiwork,
The shining glory of His face. O eagle,
They brought you to a four-square box of God,
Crippled of pinion, clipped of soaring wing;
And they left you there to flutter against the bars

In futile flying, to beat against the gates,
To droop, to dream a little, and to die.

Ah, Joe Shing-ób—by the sagamores revered
As Spruce the Conjurer, by the black-priests dubbed
The Pagan Joe—how clearly I recall
Your conversion in the long-blade's House of God,
Your wonder when you faced its golden glories.
Don't you remember?—when first you sledged from out
The frozen Valley of the Sleepy-eye,
And hammered on the gates of Fort Brazeau—
To sing farewell to Ah-nah-qúod, the Cloud,
Sleeping, banked high with flowers, clothed in the pomp
Of white man's borrowed garments in the church?
Oh, how your heart, as a child's heart beating before
High wonder-workings, thrilled at the burial splendor!—
The coffin, shimmering-black as moonlit ice,
And gleaming in a ring of waxen tapers;
After the chant of death, the long black robes,
Blown by the wind and winding over the hills
With slow black songs to the marked-out-place-of-death;
The solemn feet that moved along the road
Behind the wagon-with-windows, the wagon-of-death,
With its jingling nickel harness, its dancing plumes.
Oh, the shining splendor of that burial march,
The round-eyed wonder of the village throng!
And oh, the fierce-hot hunger, the burning envy
That seared your soul when you beheld your friend
Achieve such high distinction from the black-robes!

And later, when the cavalcade of priests
Wound down from the fenced-in-ground, like a slow black
worm
Crawling upon the snow—don't you recall?—
The meeting in the mission?—that night, your first,
In the white man's lodge of holy-medicine?
How clearly I can see your hesitant step
On the threshold of the church; within the door
Your gasp of quick surprise, your breathless mouth;
Your eyes round-white before the glimmering taper,
The golden-filigreed censer, the altar hung
With red rosettes and velvet soft as an otter's
Pelt in the frost of autumn, with tinsel sparkling
Like cold blue stars above the frozen snows.
Oh, the blinding beauty of that House of God!—
Even the glittering bar at Jock McKay's,
Tinkling with goblets of fiery devil's-spit,
With dazzling vials and many-looking mirrors,
Seemed lead against the silver of the mission.

I hear again the chanting holy-men,
The agents of the white man's Mighty Spirit,
Making their talks with strong, smooth-moving tongues:

"Hear! Hear ye, men of a pagan faith!
Forsake the idols of the heathen fathers,
The too-many ghosts that walk upon the earth.
For there lie pain and sorrow, yea, and death!

"Hear! Hear ye, men of a pagan faith!
And grasp the friendly hands we offer you
In kindly fellowship, warm hands and tender,
Yea, hands that ever give and never take.
Forswear the demon-charms of medicine-men;
Shatter the drums of conjuring Chée-sah-kée—
Yea, beyond these walls lie bitterness and death!

"Pagans!—ye men of a bastard birth!—bend,
Bow ye, proud heads, before this hallowed shrine!
Break!—break ye the knee beneath this roof,
For within this house lives God! Abide ye here!
Here shall your eyes behold His wizardry;
Here shall ye find an everlasting peace."

Ah, Joe the pagan, son of a bastard people,
Child of a race of vanquished, outlawed children,
Small wonder that you drooped your weary head,
Blinding your eyes to the suns of elder days;
For hungry bellies look for new fat gods,
And heavy heads seek newer, softer pillows.
With you again I hear the eerie chants
Floating from out the primal yesterdays—
The low sweet song of the doctor's flute, the slow
Resonant boom of the basswood water-drum,
The far voice of the fathers, calling, calling.
I see again the struggle in your eyes—
The hunted soul of a wild young grouse, afraid,
Trembling beneath maternal wings, yet lured

By the shrill whistle of the wheeling hawk.
I see your shuffling limbs, hesitant, faltering
Along the aisle—the drag of old bronzed hands
Upon your moccasined feet, the forward tug
Of others, soft and white and very tender.
One forward step . . . another . . . a quick look back!—
Another step . . . another . . . and lo! the eyes
Flutter and droop before a flaming symbol,
The strong knees break before a blazoned altar
Glimmering its tapestries in the candle-light,
The high head beaten down and bending before
New wonder-working images of gold.

And thus the black-robes brought you into the house
Wherein they kept their God, a house of logs,
Square-hewn, and thirty feet by forty. They strove
To put before you food, and purple trappings—
Oh, how they walked you up and down in the vestry,
Proudly resplendent in your white man's raiment,
Glittering and gorgeous, the envy of your tribe:
Your stiff silk hat, your scarlet sash, your shoes
Shining and squeaking gloriously with newness!
Yet even unto the end—those blood-stained nights
Of the sickness-on-the-lung; that bitter day
On the Barking Rock, when I packed you down from camp
At Split-hand Falls to the fort at Sleepy-eye;
While, drop by drop, your life went trickling out,
As sugar-sap that drips on the birch-bark bucket

And finally chills in the withered maple heart
At frozen dusk: even unto the end—
When the mission doctor, framed by guttering candles,
Hollowly tapped his hooked-horn finger here
And there upon your bony breast, like a wood-bird
Pecking and drumming on a rotten trunk—
Even unto this end I never knew
Which part of you was offering the holy prayers—
The chanting mouth, or the eyes that gazed beyond
The walls to a far land of windy valleys.
And sometimes, when your dry slow lips were moving
To perfumed psalms, I could almost, almost see
Your pagan soul aleap in the fire-light, naked,
Shuffling along to booming medicine-drums,
Shaking the flat black earth with moccasined feet,
Dancing again—back among the jangling
Bells and the stamping legs of gnarled old men—
Back to the fathers calling, calling across
Dead winds from the dim gray years.

O high-flying eagle,
Whose soul, wheeling among the sinuous winds,
Has known the molten glory of the sun,
The utter calm of dusk, and in the evening
The lullabies of moonlit mountain waters!—
The black-priests locked you in their House of God,
Behind great gates swung tight against the frightened
Quivering aspens, whispering perturbed in council,

And muttering as they tapped with timid fists
Upon the doors and strove to follow you
And hold you; tight against the uneasy winds
Wailing among the balsams, fumbling upon
The latch with fretful fingers; tight against
The crowding stars who pressed their troubled faces
Against the windows. In honest faith and zeal,
The black-robes put you in a box of God,
To swell the broken chorus of amens
And hallelujahs; to flutter against the door,
Crippled of pinion, bruised of head; to beat
With futile flying against the gilded bars;
To droop, to dream a little, and to die.

II: WHISTLING WINGS

Shing-ób, companion of my old wild years
In the land of K'tchée-gah-mée, my good right arm
When we battled bloody-fisted in the storms
And snows with rotting scurvy, with hunger raw
And ravenous as the lusting tongues of wolves—
My Joe, no longer will the ghostly mountains
Echo your red-lunged laughters in the night;
The gone lone days when we communed with God
In the language of the waterfall and wind
Have vanished with your basswood water-drum.

Do you recall our cruise to Flute-reed Falls?
Our first together—oh, many moons ago—

Before the curés built the village mission?
How, banked against our camp-fire in the bush
Of sugar-maples, we smoked kin-ník-kin-ník,
And startled the sombre buttes with round raw songs,
With wails that mocked the lynx who cried all night
As if her splitting limbs were torn with pain
Of a terrible new litter? How we talked
Till dawn of the Indian's Kéetch-ie Má-ni-dó,
The Mighty Spirit, and of the white man's God?
Don't you remember dusk at Cold-spring Hollow?—
The beaver-pond at our feet, its ebony pool
Wrinkled with silver, placid, calm as death,
Save for the fitful chug of the frog that flopped
His yellow jowls upon the lily-pad,
And the quick wet slap of the tails of beaver hurrying
Homeward across the furrowing waters, laden
With cuttings of tender poplar . . . down in the swale
The hermit-thrush who spilled his rivulet
Of golden tones into the purple seas
Of gloam among the swamps . . . and in the East,
Serene against the sky—do you remember?—
Slumbering Mont du Père, shouldering its crags
Through the crumpled clouds, rose-flushed with after-
glow . . .
And dew-lidded dusk that slipped among the valleys
Soft as a blue wolf walking in thick wet moss.
How we changed our ribald song for simple talk! . . .

"My frien', Ah-déek, you ask-um plenty hard question:
Ugh! W'ere Kéetch-ie Má-ni-dó he live?
W'ere all dose Eenzhun spirits walk and talk?
Me—I dunno! . . . Mebbe . . . mebbe over here,
In beaver-pond, in t'rush, in gromping bullfrog;
Mebbe over dere, he's sleeping in dose mountain . . .

"Sh-sh-sh! . . . Look! . . . Over dere . . . look, my frien'!
On Mont du Père . . . he's moving little! . . . ain't? . . .
Under dose soft blue blanket she's falling down
On hill and valley! Somebody—somebody's dere! . . .
In dose hill of Mont du Père, sleeping . . . sleeping. . . "

And when the fingers of the sun, lingering,
Slipped gently from the marble brow of the glacier
Pillowed among the clouds, blue-veined and cool,
How, one by one, like lamps that flicker up
In a snow-bound hamlet in the valley, the stars
Lighted their candles mirrored in the waters . . .
And floating from the hills of Sleepy-eye,
Soft as the wings of dusty-millers flying,
The fitful syllables of the Baptism River
Mumbling among its caverns hollowly,
Shouldering its emerald sweep through cragged cascades
In a flood of wafted foam, fragile, flimsy
As luna-moths fluttering on a pool . . .

"Caribou, you hear dat? . . . somebody's dere! . . .
Ain't? . . . in dose hills of Mont du Père . . . sleeping.
Sh-sh-sh! . . . You hear-um? . . . dose far 'way Flute-reed Fall? . . .
Somebody's dere in Mont du Père, sleeping . . .
Somebody he's in dere de whole night long . . .
And w'ile he's sleep, he's talking' little . . . talking. . . ."

Hush!—don't you hear K'tchée-gah-mée at midnight?—
That stretched far out from the banks of Otter-slide
To the dim wet rim of the world—North, East, West?—
The Big-water, calm, thick-flecked with the light of stars
As the wind-riffled fur of silver fox in winter . . .
The shuffle of the sands in the lapsing tide . . . .
The slow soft wash of waters on the pebbles . . .

"Sh-sh-sh! . . . Look, Ah-déek! . . . on K'tchée-gah-mée! . . .
Somebody—somet'ing he's in dere . . . ain't? . . .
He's sleep w'ere black Big-water she's deep . . . Ho! . . .
In morning he's jump up from hees bed and race
Wit' de wind; but tonight he's sleeping . . . rolling little . . .
Dreaming about hees woman . . . rolling . . . sleeping. . . ."

And later—you recall?—beyond the peaks
That tusked the sky like fangs of a coyote snarling,
The full-blown mellow moon that floated up
Like a liquid-silver bubble from the waters,
Serenely, till she pricked her delicate film
On the slender splinter of a cloud, melted,
And trickled from the silver-dripping edges.
Oh, the splendor of that night! . . . The Twin-fox stars
That loped across the pine-ridge . . . Red Ah-núng,
Blazing from out the cavern of the gloom
Like the smoldering coal in the eye of carcajou . . .
The star-dust in the valley of the sky,
Flittering like glow-worms in a reedy meadow!

"Somebody's dere . . . He's walk-um in dose cloud . . .
Look! . . . You see-um? . . . He's mak'-um for hees
woman
De w'ile she sleep, dose t'ing she want-um most—
Blue dress for dancing! . . . You see, my frien'? . . .
ain't? . . .
He's t'rowing on de blanket of dose sky
Dose plenty-plenty handfuls of w'ite stars;
He's sewing on dose plenty teet' of elk,
Dose shiny looking-glass and plenty beads.
Somebody's dere . . . somet'ing he's in dere. . . ."

The green moons went—and many many winters.
Yet we held together, Joe, until our day
Of falling leaves, like two split sticks of willow

Lashed tight with buckskin buried in the bark.
Do you recollect our last long cruise together,
To Hollow-bear, on our line of marten traps?—
When cold Pee-bóan, the Winter-maker, hurdling
The rim-rock ridge, shook out his snowy hair
Before him on the wind and heaped up the hollows?—
Flanked by the drifts, our lean-to of toboggans,
Our bed of pungent balsam, soft as down
From the bosom of a whistling swan in autumn . . .
Our steaming sledge-dogs buried in the snow-bank,
Nuzzling their snouts beneath their tented tails,
And dreaming of the paradise of dogs . . .
Our fire of pine-boughs licking up the snow,
And tilting at the shadows in the coulee . . .
And you, rolled warm among the beaver-pelts,
Forgetful of your sickness-on-the-lung,
Of the fever-pains and coughs that wracked your bones—
You, beating a war song on your drum,
And laughing as the scarlet-moccasined flames
Danced on the coals and bellowed up the sky.

Don't you remember? . . . the snowflakes drifting down
Thick as the falling petals of wild plums . . .
The clinker-ice and the scudding fluff of the whirlpool
Muffling the summer-mumblings of the brook . . .
The turbulent waterfall protesting against
Such early winter-sleep, like a little boy
Who struggles with the calamity of slumber,

Knuckling his leaden lids and his tingling nose
With a pudgy fist, and fretfully flinging back
His snowy cover with his petulant fingers.
Out on the windy barrens restless bands
Of caribou, rumped up against the gale,
Suddenly breaking before the rabid blast,
Scampering off like tumbleweeds in a cyclone . . .
The low of bulls from the hills where worried moose,
Nibbling the willows, the wintergreens, the birches,
Were yarding up in the sheltering alder-thicket . . .
From the cedar wind-break, the bleat of calves wedged warm
Against the bellies of their drowsy cows . . .
And then the utter calm . . . the wide white drift
That lay upon the world as still and ghastly
As the winding-sheet of death . . . the sudden snap
Of a dry twig . . . the groan of sheeted rivers
Beating with naked hands upon the ice . . .
The brooding night . . . the crackle of cold skies . . .

"Sh-sh-sh-sh! . . . Look, my frien', . . . somebody's dere! . . .
Ain't? . . . over dere? . . . He's come from dose Land-of-Winter! . . .
Wit' quilt he's cover-um up dose baby mink,
Dose cub, dose wild arbutus, dose jump-up-Johnny . . .
He's keep hees chil'ens warm for long, long winter . . .
Sh-sh-sh-sh! . . . Somebody's dere on de w'ite savanne! . . .

Somebody's dere! . . . He's walk-um in de timber . . .
He's cover-um up hees chil'ens, soft . . . soft . . ."

And later, when your bird-claw fingers rippled
Over the holes of your cedar Bée-bee-gwún
Mellowly in a tender tune, how the stars,
Like little children trooping from their teepees,
Danced with their nimble feet across the sky
To the running-water music of your flute . . .
And how, with twinkling heels they scurried off
Before the Northern Light swaying, twisting,
Spiralling like a slender silver smoke
On the thin blue winds, and feeling out among
The frightened starry children of the sky . . .

"Look! . . . in de Land-of-Winter . . . somet'ing's dere! . . .
Somebody—he's reaching out hees hand! . . . for me! . . .
Ain't? . . . For me he's waiting . . . Somebody's dere! . . .
Somebody he's in dere, waiting . . . waiting . . ."

Don't you remember?—the ghostly silence, splintered
At last by a fist that cracked the hoary birch,
By a swift black fist that shattered the brittle air,
Splitting it into a million frosty fragments . . .
And dreary Northwind, coughing in the snow,
Spitting among the glistening sheeted pines,

And moaning on the barrens among the bones
Of gaunt white tamaracks mournful and forlorn . . .

"Sh-sh-sh-sh! . . . My Caribou! . . . Somebody's
dere! . . .
He's crying . . . little bit crazy in dose wind . . .
Ain't? . . . You hear-um? . . . far 'way . . . crying
Lak my old woman w'en she's lose de baby
And no can find-um—w'en she's running everyw'ere,
Falling in snow, talking little bit crazy,
Calling and crying for shees little boy . . .
Sh-sh-sh-sh! . . . Somet'ing's dere . . . you hear-um?
. . . ain't? . . .
Somebody—somebody's dere, crying . . . crying . . ."

Then from the swale, where shadows pranced grotesquely
Solemn, like phantom puppets on a string,
A cry—pointed, brittle, perpendicular—
As startling as a thin stiff blade of ice
Laid swift and sharp on fever-burning flesh:
The tremulous wail of a lonely shivering wolf,
Piercing the world's great heart like an icy sword . . .

"Look! . . . Quick! . . . Ah-déek! . . . Somebody's
dere! . . .
Ain't? . . . He's come—he's come for me—for me!
Me—me, I go! . . . . . My Caribou . . .
Dose fire—dose fire she's going out—she's cold . . .

T'row—t'row on dose knots of pine . . . Mee-gwétch! . . .
And pull 'way from dose flame—dose pan of sour-dough,
If you want eat—in de morning—damn-good flap-jack . . .

"Sh-sh-sh-sh! . . . Somet'ing's dere! . . . You hear-um? . . . ain't? . . .
Somebody—somebody's dere, calling . . . calling . . .
I go . . . I go—me! . . . me . . . I go. . . ."

III: TALKING WATERS

O eagle whose whistling wings have known the lift
Of high mysterious hands, and the wild sweet music
Of big winds among the ultimate stars,
The black-robes put you in a box of God,
Seeking in honest faith and holy zeal
To lay upon your lips new songs, to swell
The chorus of amens and hallelujahs.
O bundle of copper bones tossed in a hole,
Here in the place-of-death—God's fenced-in ground!—
Beneath these put-in pines and waxen lilies,
They placed you in a crimson gash in the hillside,
Here on a bluff above the Sleepy-eye,
Where the Baptism River, mumbling among the canyons,
Shoulders its flood through crooning waterfalls
In a mist of wafted foam fragile as petals

Of windflowers blowing across the green of April;
Where ghosts of wistful leaves go floating up
In the rustling blaze of autumn, like silver smokes
Slenderly twisting among the thin blue winds;
Here in the great gray arms of Mont du Père,
Where the shy arbutus, the mink, and the Johnny-jump-up
Huddle and whisper of a long, long winter;
Where stars, with soundless feet, come trooping up
To dance to the water-drums of white cascades—
Where stars, like little children, go singing down
The sky to the flute of the wind in the willow-tree—
Somebody—somebody's there . . . O pagan Joe . . .
Can't you see Him as He moves among the mountains—
Where dusk, dew-lidded, slips among the valleys
Soft as a blue wolf walking in thick wet moss?
Look! . . . my friend! . . . at the breast of Mont du
Père! . . .
Sh-sh-sh-sh! . . . Don't you hear His talking waters . . .
Soft in the gloam as broken butterflies
Hovering above a somber pool? . . . Sh-sh-sh-sh!
Somebody's there . . . in the heart of Mont du Père . . .
Somebody—somebody's there, sleeping . . . sleeping . . .

Lew Sarett

STILL COLORS

VELVET SHOES

Let us walk in the white snow
  In a soundless space;
With footsteps quiet and slow,
  At a tranquil pace,
  Under veils of white lace.

I shall go shod in silk,
  And you in wool,
White as a white cow's milk,
  More beautiful
  Than the breast of a gull.

We shall walk through the still town
  In a windless peace;
We shall step upon white down,
  Upon silver fleece,
  Upon softer than these.

We shall walk in velvet shoes:
  Wherever we go
Silence will fall like dews
  On white silence below.
  We shall walk in the snow.

"FIRE AND SLEET AND CANDLE-LIGHT"

For this you've striven,
  Daring, to fail:
Your sky is riven
  Like a tearing veil.

For this, you've wasted
  Wings of your youth;
Divined, and tasted
  Bitter springs of truth.

From sand unslakèd
  Twisted strong cords,
And wandered naked
  Among trysted swords.

There's a word unspoken,
  A knot untied.
Whatever is broken
  The earth may hide.

The road was jagged
  Over sharp stones:
Your body's too ragged
  To cover your bones.

The wind scatters
  Tears upon dust;

Your soul's in tatters
  Where the spears thrust.

Your race is ended—
  See, it is run:
Nothing is mended
  Under the sun.

Straight as an arrow
  You fall to a sleep
Not too narrow
  And not too deep.

SILVER FILAGREE

The icicles wreathing
  On trees in festoon
Swing, swayed to our breathing:
  They're made of the moon.

She's a pale, waxen taper;
  And these seem to drip
Transparent as paper
  From the flame of her tip.

Molten, smoking a little,
  Into crystal they pass;
Falling, freezing, to brittle
  And delicate glass.

Elinor Wylie

Each a sharp-pointed flower,
  Each a brief stalactite
Which hangs for an hour
  In the blue cave of night.

ATAVISM

I always was afraid of Somes's Pond:
Not the little pond, by which the willow stands,
Where laughing boys catch alewives in their hands
In brown, bright shallows; but the one beyond.
There, when the frost makes all the birches burn
Yellow as cow-lilies, and the pale sky shines
Like a polished shell between black spruce and pines,
Some strange thing tracks us, turning where we turn.

You'll say I dream it, being the true daughter
Of those who in old times endured this dread.
Look! Where the lily-stems are showing red
A silent paddle moves below the water,
A sliding shape has stirred them like a breath;
Tall plumes surmount a painted mask of death.

Elinor Wylie

AGE AND YOUTH

How little wisdom in how many years—
How little wisdom and how much of pain!
And now the slack knees tremble, the eye blears,
And mist-wreaths blur the mirror of the brain.
And Memory, in her niche, with fumbling fingers
Plucks at old dreams mislaid which crumble soon;
And there is naught she touches now that lingers;
And her lamp smokes and dims, a clouded moon.
And Youth, a long way off, looks sidewise over
Into the place of shadow, and stops singing
The immemorial lay of Love's true lover;
While, for a space, Hope's hand grows tried of clinging
To his limp hand, and droops careless and cold
Along the grass—and even Youth seems old.

And even Youth seems old? . . . But Youth *is* old,
Old as the springtide, as the April flowers.
Youth's infinite history is a tale thrice told—
Aeons but mask them in Youth's counted hours.
That rosebud, and the dew upon that rose,
Lack but the memory of all ages past;
The wavering snowflake knows not—but God knows
The winters it has lasted and shall last!
Yes, Youth is old . . . and Age is ever young—
A new thing in its season, a new thing;
New, and more terrible than ever tongue

Of fool or poet has dared to say or sing!
Yet not more terrible than Youth, that seems
A dreamer's dream of some dead dreamer's dreams.

RIDDLE

You would be free!
Would you be free
If you were free?
Is the wind free,
Or the wind-worn sea?
Or sun-tied earth,
Or the earth-tied moon?
Is Ariel?
Is Caliban?
Is Satan in Hell?
Or God in Heaven?

Riddle my rune,
Little man!

Lee Wilson Dodd

"E BE THAN"

They come weeping,
They raise their voices,
Women meet them
As they ride from the plain.
The band is home,
But none rejoices—
For many men
Return not again.

The chief leads them;
Yet, heavy-hearted,
He slowly rides
From the wide, shining plain.
Warriors mourn
The friends departed—
For many men
Return not again.

Women follow;
The children, weeping,
Straggle along
Through the dust of the plain,
Many mourning
Friends or fathers—
For many men
Return not again.

Carroll Lane Fenton

Priests, chanting
The sacred death-song,
Raise dull grave-poles
High above the wide plain;
Men mourn
Sons and cousins—
For dead men's souls
Return not again.

Carroll Lane Fenton

SONG

Hills are all aflower,
  Skies are all afire—
Fool was I to sorrow
  For a dead desire!

Lo, the April marvel
  Stirs the earth again:
Break, my heart, of beauty,
  That would not break of pain!

H. Thompson Rich

TO A NEW ENGLAND GIRL

Ah, you have taken my hot delight
In France and stripped it of its wings;
Broken the swift Icarian flight
Of untoward imaginings
That sought a sun hardly my own.
And you have winged and brought me down
Through sudden ecstasy to rest
Upon your white New England breast,
Where love is fragrantly austere
As those deep-bosomed hillsides are
That slope down to Franconia,
Full-blossoming in early year.

TO AN AUTHENTIC PRIEST

He weighs me down, this Christ of yours.
He weighs me down—his arm is on
My elbow in the streakèd dawn;
Oppresses he my evening hours;
Still he outshines the manifold
Bright rays that centre in my heart.
Much loveliness I knew grows cold
The while his threatening fires start
To gnaw at this old edifice
Of sturdy lusts. Outsavors he

The savor of my ancient bliss.
He tempts me to apostasy.

Edward Townsend Booth

THE INTRUDER

Across my book your hand augustly reaches—
  Thrusts it away.
I turn impatient to the window, watching
  The tossed trees' play,
March sunshine glinting on a chilly rain-pool
  That snow-banks frame.
A lusty wind comes gusting on its errand
  And names your name.

Captive, defeated, having striven I yield me
  To thought awhile;
Letting the sunlight on the roughened waters
  Bear me your smile;
Hearing the mischief-making wind that named you
  Question afresh
If spirit find in spirit full contentment
  Only through flesh.

Grace Stone Coates

THREE SONNETS

PERSPECTIVE OF CO-ORDINATION

The circles never fully round, but change
In spiral gropings—not, as on a wall,
Flat-patterned, but back into space they fall,
In depth on depth of indeterminate range.
Where they begin may be here at my hand
Or there far lost beyond the search of eye;
And though I sit, desperately rapt, and try
To trace round-round the line, and understand
The sequence, the relation, the black-art
Of their continuance, hoping to find good
At least some logic of part-joined-to-part,
I judge the task one of too mad a mood:
And prophecy throws its shadow on my heart,
And Time's last sunset flames along my blood.

WORLD BEYOND WORLD

Two mirrors, face to face, is all I need
To build a mazy universe for my mind
Where world grows out of world. I dizzily find
Solace in endless planes that there recede.
The fifth plane-world, soft-shimmering through the glass—
Surely it has a light more bland than ours.

And in the far ninth hides a whirl of powers
Unknown to our dull senses. I would pass
Down the long vista, pausing now and then
To taste the flavor of each separate sphere,
And with each vast perspective cool my eye.
Whom should I meet there? Never living men!
What should I love there? Nothing I hold dear!
What would the end be? Endless as am I!

LEAF-MOVEMENT

From its thin branch high in the autumn wind
The yellow leaf now sails in upward flight;
Hovers at top-slope; then, a whirling bright
Eddy of motion, sinks. The storm behind
With gusts and veering tyrannies would uphold
Even as it downward beats this gorgeous thing
Which like an angel's lost and shattered wing
Against the grey sky sweeps its broken gold.
Another eddy, desperate or in mirth,
Brings it to rest here on the crackled earth
Where men can see it better than on the bough.
What quite preposterous irony of wind's-will
Touches it where it lies, golden and still,
And once more lifts it vainly heavenward now!

Arthur Davison Ficke

COMMENT

DRINKWATER ON ABERCROMBIE

MR. JOHN DRINKWATER, during his recent visit to Chicago, threw out a challenge to the advocates of the "new movement" by saying, during one of his club lectures, "Lascelles Abercrombie is the most important poet under forty-five now writing." To be sure, he expressed the opinion tentatively, remarking on the futility of any attempt at finality in contemporary criticism—on the impossibility of ranking an artist while he is still in active career. And it must be admitted that to many of his hearers the eminence decreed to Mr. Abercrombie was a convincing example of this futility.

We all express opinions, but, unless blind egotists, we do it with Mr. Drinkwater's modest reserve; offering them as a passing and perishing comment, a stick thrown on the current rather than a tree planted to outlast its violence. And so, while agreeing heartily with Mr. Drinkwater as to the unfinality—if one may coin a word—of contemporary opinion, let us take up what we consider his over-praise of Mr. Abercrombie, and try to justify a contrary point of view.

Mr. Abercrombie is distinctly, even slavishly, in the Victorian tradition. Tennyson and Swinburne are his immediate progenitors, with such traces of remoter ancestry as they have handed down. He loves to wander in the old protected gardens, amid a lush overgrowth of verbal foliage,

a heavy atmosphere of rank rhetorical perfumes. He represents the extreme of all those qualities of aesthetic motive and style which the more progressive modern poets, from Yeats and Robinson to Ezra Pound and Carl Sandburg, have been leading us away from—qualities which express, not the strength of "the tradition," but its feebleness and excess, not its growth but its decay. Let us illustrate by quoting a rather long passage from *Emblems of Love.* It is Sappho who speaks, the brief and magic Sappho, who, though remembered for only thirty lyric lines, has tempted more poets to platitudes than even Helen of Troy herself. We quote three sentences—the first two-thirds of her monologue:

This bright earth
Maketh my heart to falter; yea, my spirit
Bends and bows down in the delight of vision,
Caught by the force of beauty, swayed about
Like seaweed moved by the deep winds of water:
For it is all the news of love to me.
Through paths pine-fragrant, where the shaded ground
Is strewn with fruits of scarlet husk, I come,
As if through maidenhood's uncertainty,
Its darkness colored with strange untried thoughts;
Hither I come, here to the flowery peak
Of this white cliff, high up in golden air,
Where glowing earth and sea and divine light
Are in mine eyes like ardor, and like love
Are in my soul: love's glowing gentleness,
The sunny grass of meadows and the trees,
Towers of dark green flame, and that white town
Where from the hearths a fragrance of burnt wood,
Blue-purple smoke creeps like a stain of wine
Along the paved blue sea: yea, all this kindness
Lies amid salt immeasurable flowing,
The power of the sea, passion of love.
I, Sappho, have made love the mastery

Most sacred over man; but I have made it
A safety of things gloriously known,
To house his spirit from the darkness blowing
Out of the vast unknown: from me he hath
The wilful mind to make his fortune fair.

We hear a number of old favorites discoursing thus eloquently in *Emblems of Love*—Helen, Vashti, Judith and Holofernes, a pair of warrior cave-men, and finally the typical He and She of an achieved millennial world. In this last of the dialogues, before the *Marriage Song* and *Epilogue,* "She" clothes her passion in the following lofty lines:

What hast thou done to me!—I would have soul,
Before I knew thee, Love, a captive held
By flesh. Now, only delighted with desire,
My body knows itself to be nought else
But thy heart's worship of me; and my soul
Therein is sunlight held by warm gold air.
Nay, all my body is become a song
Upon the breath of spirit, a love-song.

To match this nobly rotund declaration of love, one must go back to Tennyson's lover in *The Princess,* whose passion so overwhelmed him that he cried:

Nay, but thee—
From yearlong poring on thy pictured eyes
Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen, and saw
Thee woman through the crust of iron moods
That masked thee from men's reverence up, and forced
Sweet love on pranks of saucy boyhood; now
Given back to life, to life indeed, through thee,
Indeed I love.

It took twenty more lines to clinch the affair with Tennyson's princess, and Mr. Abercrombie's He and She are even more expansive.

Mr. Untermeyer calls Mr. Abercrombie's type of product "metaphysical poetry." Without inquiring whether this phrase is a contradiction in terms, one might insist that *Emblems of Love* contains very little of either poetry or metaphysics, that it is merely a turgid, long-winded artificializing of certain grand old tales which only genius of a high order can touch to new beauty. To me the dullness of it is not atoned for by magic of sound or phrase, or by that swift breathless rightness of imagery with which the true poet surprises us. Mr. Abercrombie offers plenty of images—carefully thought out, elaborately wrought similes and metaphors set forth in his heavy, slow-pacing iambics according to the most approved classic rules; images which we follow at a respectful distance and without a thrill. Here is one, from the speech of a "tramp" in the dialogue *Blind,* in *Interludes and Poems,* published in 1908:

> Fool, I have been
> One of the mutiny that attempts God
> And to take landing on the side of Heaven,
> For foothold on the slippery peril of wall
> Reaching and tearing at God's sheer resentment,
> Still to be thrown down by the towering glass
> A litter of upturned faces, gesturing
> Against the calm front of his Sabbath's wall,
> The desperate height of shining builded scorn.

Interludes and Poems, issued when the poet was only twenty-four, might be excused as one of the solemn follies of youth—youth over-educated and reeking with "metaphysical" wisdom. The five dramatic *Interludes* have each a large, profound, and usually tragic subject-motive, under

which the pompous verse staggers, heavily overburdened. One is hardly convinced when God himself utters a speech of nearly fifty lines, beginning—

> Simple this prayer is, smelling sweet to me,
> Therefore I take it and begin my power:
> Yea, I will largely let thee out of here,
> Of being beautiful, otherwise tiring thee.

Nor does *The Seeker* persuade us when he says:

> I have achieved. That which the lonely man
> Spoke of, core of the world, that Self, I know.

with seventy lines more to explain the achievement.

At twenty-eight the poet should have matured somewhat, but *Emblems of Love* shows him still more deeply involved in the tangled meshes of an intellectually theorized and heavily artificialized art. He might have persisted in that manner to the end if the "new movement" hadn't begun about that time; for even in England the new movement, as expressed in Harold Monro's *Poetry and Drama* and the Georgian anthologies, meant something simpler than Mr. Abercrombie's style had as yet achieved. In the first *Georgian Poetry* we find his dialogue—between a sea captain, a doubting Thomas and a mysterious Stranger—a little more tolerable, though it moralizes tediously; and in the second his play, *The End of the World,* shows the beginning of an effort at modern diction and a less involved style—a necessary change, since the people are ordinary publicans and sinners. The play is stiffly talky, however, and its motive is too slight for all the pother of reflective or didactic speeches.

Deborah, published in 1913, is another evidence of a change of heart. Even though still clogged and rhetorical, the style seems almost bare in comparison with the works above quoted, as the following passage shows:

> That was not wind!
> That was a hound's tongue! Deborah, you heard?
> The beagles out of hell are loose in the wind,
> The Gabriel hounds are running wild tonight!
> Oh now, God rest the little one's soul—he died
> Unchristened, and the Gabriel hounds are out!
> Here we two sit and warm us at the fire,
> And yonder in the darkness and the wind
> The little soul of Miriam's still-born child
> Runs crying from the mouths of the Gabriel hounds!

Deborah is a good example of the tragedy deliberate, descriptive and static, so to speak; tragedy which is willed by the author rather than decreed by fate, in which the characters are pulled by strings instead of impelled by their own mysterious and unreasoning volition. The plot—or rather the three plots, for the three acts fall apart—is perfectly reasonable, indeed too reasonable. But it lacks spontaneity, the breath of life; and therefore we are not convinced when Miriam and Deborah run out into the deadly marsh.

Mr. Abercrombie seems to the writer the extreme example of the kind of thing that is the matter with much modern English poetry. His over-intellectualized motives, and his lush and leaden involved style have been admired too much by the Georgians. And so we feel impelled to record our divergence from Mr. Drinkwater's publicly announced opinion.

H. M.

REVIEWS

NECTAR AND SYRUP

Collected Poems, by Walter de la Mare (2 vols.) Henry Holt & Co.

A fit of admiration for de la Mare's works has upset the U. S. A. and her newspapers. But every newspaper article I have read is a weak jumble, done in a strange attitude of self-defense. One of the last champions of rhyme is passing —if this chance is lost, rhyme is to be an entirely lost proposition: this is what they seem to say.

This chance is not completely lost. Walter de la Mare is a good rhymer, one of the very best of today. Indeed, he is probably the sweetest rhymer of today. His *Peacock Pie* poems and his *Poems for Childhood* are clever and darling. They are not the drooling child-poems one often meets with. They are good old-fashioned child-poems and a little more: there is a naively mystical note in most of them, and bright new humor.

And so *Listeners, Motley* and the previous book, *Poems 1906,* contain poems that have a hauntingly sweet music, and others the mysticism of which is real, sweet and naive; also landscapes delicately drawn, like this one:

> Snow at break of day,
> On fields forlorn and bare.
> For shadow it hath rose,
> Azure and amethyst;
> And every air that blows
> Dies out in beauteous mist.

But too many other poems strike us as Maxfield Parrish's pictures do; they are at first sight lovely; but then, to more scrupulous eyes, this loveliness becomes falsity. They are embellishments rather than works of beauty. The naiveté of them is studied, and they are childish where they should be simple. The truthfulness of the image is sacrificed for the sake of vividness, with the effect that a short-lived vividness is attained which dies under scrupulous eyes. Thus the famous moonlight poem, where everything is silver even to the paws of the sleeping dog and the snout of the running rat, is essentially a falsified picture. Stripped of truthfulness, all that remains of it is a sometimes pleasing jingle.

As for his much discussed use of hackneyed words, symbols, colors, music—inasmuch as this is the age-old vice of poets and scribblers, there is nothing to say in de la Mare's defense. And inasmuch as our times have witnessed a quite wonderful movement towards complete newness in poetry, Mr. de la Mare, for this serious fault of his, may be called unoriginal. It is extenuating that the quaint delightful music of some of his poems gains in quaintness by the use of words which, if hackneyed, have a certain traditional flavor. But the worst of it is that this use of hackneyed language and forms springs from a lack of faith in today; and moreover it is made possible by the fact that nothing very actual concerns Mr. de la Mare, for were he concerned in things that require to be expressed in a modern language he would use it. Here we find fairies and witches of the old type, we find knights and damsels instead of guys and janes. Why not give us

today's witches? There are some. And why not give us, if not guys and janes, today's knights and damsels? There are some.

However, the critic should not say, "Why not?" He is concerned in the work of art as it is and not as it should be. Well, let us admit then that we have seen these witches, these damsels, these knights before, in a hundred books of the past. De la Mare is a repeater. Not a bad one, but for that reason he is just so much less a poet. He is a poet of abstract sentiment chiefly. And in this abstraction we detect a lack of roots, a lack of force. Even most of his landscapes are, as we have said, embellishments of old models; and the only human beings in these books are some characters from Shakespeare.

Like many poets, Walter de la Mare belongs in the class of sentimental rejecters of reality and today. His mysticism, what there is of it, is therefore a weak thing, a negation rather than an exuberance. His music has the melodious sweetness of a luxury, rather than of everyday song.

Among his best child poems we find this:

> Ann! Ann!
> Come quick as you can!
> There's a fish that talks
> In the frying pan.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> He put up his mouth
> And moaned "Alas!"
> Oh, most mournful—
> "Alas, alack!"
> Then turned to his sizzling,
> And sank him back.

We must say it again, some of these child poems are as delightful as Mother Goose's. *E. Carnevali*

ONE POET

Advice, by Maxwell Bodenheim, Alfred A. Knopf.
The Forerunner: His Parables and Poems, by Kahlil Gibran, Alfred A. Knopf.
Neighbors, by Wilfrid Wilson Gibson. Macmillan Co.
The Birds and Other Poems, by J. C. Squire. George H. Doran Co.
Songs While Wandering, by A. Newberry Choyce. John Lane Co.

There are three Englishmen, one Syrian and one American in this list; and patriots may stand up and cheer, since the single American has written the only book among them that is worth any serious consideration. I shall postpone my comment upon it to the end.

Mr. Choyce sings some old songs while wandering. His chief distinction seems to be that he was wounded in action, and has just completed a lecture tour through our West, South and Middle-west. The publishers themselves think so, for they let these important matters take first place in their wrapper description and add a few perfunctory words about charm, lyric qualities, etc. To these casualties were added a small gift for rhyming, and a grateful heart. So we have variations on the theme of God's own country, rocky mountains, peaceful valleys, descriptions of soulful meetings

with a Mormon maid and an Indian princess, and other tender damsels, varied with nice longings for Home (England, in the sheltering sea, etc.) and Mother. It is quite as if the English Captain in Shaw's *Great Catherine* had traveled here, and appreciatively burst into poetry. The only comfort one can get is that Mr. Choyce is evidently quite young and has years of self-awareness before him.

In language that is simple and apt, that even rises to a quiet poignancy, a pervading suspense that is truly stirring, Mr. Gibson's *Neighbors* is a gathering of those intimate biographies that catch a life-time on one pivotal perception. This, the larger part of the book, gives it some distinction. If read too consecutively, impressions are dulled by a monotony of theme and treatment. Mr. Gibson is skilful in weaving his spell, but he cannot escape it himself; one finds the same emotions underlying, the same moods pervading all the poems. In the end one rises from the book, having fed upon fare touched with a faint savour of the bread of Elysium; and been made hungrier thereby. The other poems are mainly occasional pieces of little importance.

We have had conductor-music, and now we have editor-poetry. J. C. Squire presents charming, well worked, intelligent poems which show discrimination and taste. I have the impression, in reading his book, of skilful parodies upon some unknown and invisible poet. There is disproportionate intellectuality, but it entertains and stimulates even if it tends merely to wear a path around old emotions. It is, after all, something to get the careful expression of a highly

cultured, versatile man, whose words have restraint and authority if not the compulsion of genius. The first impression is of admiration for work well done, for the faultless architecture of his metaphors, and the unobtrusive efficiency of his rhythms.

Parables and prose poems like those in *The Forerunner,* by Kahlil Gibran, will have all the unpopularity of sermons outside the pulpit. The form itself, that of free, self-responsible utterance, gives an irritating finality to the content, which a world grown skeptical is tempted to snub. There is in this book neither the stark authenticity of prophecy, nor the beautiful crystallizations of a creative imagination. What we have here is pompous dramatizations of only half-individualized platitudes; sounding sufficiently sad-true, through a mist of fine language, to catch the attention with mirages. The accompanying drawings, in dim shadow-shape and vague lines, give a fine touch of completeness to the book, supplying a somewhat needed justification for the text. Incidentally, this volume should be praised as a specimen of bookmaking. Mr. Knopf has been conscientious in making out his list; and he has been careful, as other progressive publishers have not, to give each book an appropriate format.

Mr. Bodenheim's book is a garland of persistently new flowers, so different that a myth might be made of the strange sap in these short stems, of the new designs made by the cluster of the petals, the new color, new flesh; and of the truly terrifying fact that there are no roots—or at least none that are visible or palpable or explicable.

We know that Bodenheim's faith is an exaltation of form "—out of his own mouth" if we were inclined to a polemic. What philosophy has not been enunciated a thousand times, what beauty has not been celebrated over and over, what sunrise, sunset, moon, sea, or mountain has not been published into notoriety by a timeless following of rhapsodists! Nothing that a man can touch but is mottled over with fingerprints. The business of the poet then, if he is not to add merely a new and more or less unrecognizable parody, is to mold his material into a new shape, to give creative individuality a play in fashioning an ultimate appearance.

Actually Bodenheim has done more. He has found new themes, going to neglected or forbidden realms to find them. And he has come to them with a new attitude, enabling him to equip his foundry with new molds.

In doing this, in not making his poems a personal synthesis of instinctively selective preferences, in seeming to have written suddenly and on impulse, without drawing matter and manner from confessed admirations or self-fertilizing memories, Bodenheim has actually proved himself an original poet. He has broken through where so many others have wandered in circles, have taken vague new paths and come dishearteningly back to their starting-places; where so many others, less self-sufficient, have fallen into impotent night-radiances of disintegration.

A new attitude is a rare achievement, and originality an enviable state of blessedness. One may well believe that new words and new meanings are needed for its expression,

and forgive the inversions, ellipses, forced embraces, exaggerations and diminutions, of his vocabulary. But it has its penalty. To what conflagration Mr. Bodenheim's fire may lead to is impossible to say, but its flame is small and illuminates a little space only. One misses in his work exactly that contact with a literary evolution which enables lesser poets over cleared fields to cover wider areas.

It is impossible to miss or fail to enjoy the exhilaration of this verse. Like the composers who have transformed music, who have swelled the orchestra with new instruments, who have added to each section whole new gamuts, and in daring new combinations have made the orchestra more articulate: so Bodenheim is widening the scope of words; his verbs are quivering with new gestures; his adjectives are suffused with new and subtle colors; his nouns cry out new names; his pronouns enter strange new relationships; and the juxtapositions of phenomenal contrasts and harmonies have added new sounds, deeper and more sonorous, or shriller and more piercing.

But just as the new composers as yet are finding it hard enough work to utter the new sounds, and have hardly begun to sing songs with them; so Bodenheim has, in my opinion, found it hard enough work to fashion the new meanings of words, without attempting to say much with them. His poems, be they about grass-blades or men, have a final common appearance; because their subjects are not inspirations, but serve, like the string in the chemical precipitate, merely to focus crystallization. Any string would do as

well; and to provide himself a store of strings we find the poet tending to make catalogues; he gives advice impartially to a large list of things and it occurs to me that he would give the same advice to any fortuitous association of subjects; that Bodenheim had to give advice, and it didn't matter to whom. So we find him drawing a series of portraits. So we find him wearily stretching out to the stock figures—to prostitutes, Pierrots, etc.

There is no quarrel with this. It seems to be Mr. Bodenheim's destiny to break the molecules of words into atoms of meanings, and to indicate crudely the possible new associations. No doubt other poets will use them for greater speech. *Isidor Schneider*

TEACHER-POETS

The Roamer and Other Poems, by George Edward Woodberry. Harcourt, Brace and Howe.

Sonnets from a Prison Camp, by Archibald Allen Bowman. John Lane Co.

When one reads Dr. Woodberry's poems, the question arises, why does this man's work occupy so high a place in the minds of many supposedly discriminating people? There is even a Woodberry Society—the only society dedicated to a living American writer. Yet Dr. Woodberry's poetry is merely the careful, well-wrought work of a cultivated gentleman, trained in literary traditions and familiar with the world of books.

I wonder if the explanation is not to be found in the prevalent American theory that because a man is successful in one field he is necessarily to be treated with reverence in every other field. The average citizen believes that because Henry Ford has made millions of dollars building automobiles he is an authority on the single tax, the Jews, the theory of relativity, the internal problems of Santo Domingo, and the doctrine of transubstantiation. The relatively learned gentlemen who comprise the Woodberry Society may not swallow such bunk as that, but they share mildly in the popular hallucination. Dr. Woodberry was a great, even a delightful, university teacher. A census of the Woodberry Society would probably show a comfortable majority impressed originally with their hero's pedagogical ability and personal charm. He was a great teacher; ergo he is a great poet.

Dr. Woodberry's latest volume contains a long spiritual narrative, *The Roamer,* in blank verse; a sonnet sequence, *Ideal Passion;* and a number of other sonnets and lyrics. Technical excellence a-plenty is found in all the poems; so is conventional but sincere idealism. What is lacking is intensity. There is about the emotions an unearthly pallor. Austerity, the quality which the poems most nearly approach, is just missed—and missed because they are lit not by the consuming white flame of experience, but by the clear, cold, steady light of intellectual reflection.

Sonnets from a Prison Camp is also the work of a teacher. Dr. Bowman, now professor of philosophy in Princeton

University, was an officer in the British army and was taken prisoner by the Germans. The hundred or more sonnets dealing with his experiences are too numerous unless exceedingly good, which these are not. They are interesting, but they give an impression mainly of craftsmanship. There is too much emphasis on ethical and esthetic theory—not surprising in a professor of philosophy. Moreover, the sonnets tend to form an explicit rather than an implicit narrative, whereas the sonnet sequence, being a succession of lyrics, is best adapted to the opposite.

Nelson Antrim Crawford

TWO BOOKS OF REFUGE

Black Marigolds, translated by E. Powys Mathers.
The Dark Mother, by Waldo Frank. Boni & Liveright.

There be two deluges, everlasting. One is the deluge of new poetry, which one may witness at the POETRY office; the other is the deluge of new novels from England, aggravated by the indigenous rain.

This month we, the lovers of poetry, stand on a rock out of the one deluge; and on a raft over the second deluge. The rock is a little yellow pamphlet, decorated with strange black scrawls, *Black Marigolds;* the raft is a novel, *The Dark Mother,* by the author of *Our America.*

Whoever thought of Sanskrit? Whoever heard of Chauras? And who is E. Powys Mathers?

Here is one of the most beautiful poems I ever read. It

is the love poem of Chauras, a young man of nineteen hundred years ago, dying for having loved the king's daughter.

> If I see . . . . her body beaten about with flame,
> Wounded by the flaring spear of love. . . .
> Then is my heart buried alive in snow.

Seeing the stupendous wealth of expression in this ancient poem, so beautifully rendered by Mr. Mathers, we dreamed that in those days there were only poets living in a beautiful world, only poetic words to be spoken. But the pitiful struggle of the beautiful is eternal; and here too we have a glimpse of it, where eternal love and death are sung:

> They chatter her weakness through the two bazaars,
> Who was so strong to love me. And small men,
> That buy and sell for silver, being slaves,
> Crinkle the fat about their eyes; and yet
> No Prince of the Cities of the Sea has taken her,
> Leading to his grim bed. Little lonely one,
> You clung to me as a garment clings, my girl.

A delightfully quaint flavor is given to the poem by the slightly ungrammatical expressions and punctuation. In the translator's own words: "I have tried, by not letting my verse become a coherent lyric poem in the English sense, to keep its disjointed air."

This is one of those cases in which we cannot do better than quote:

> I see her—far face blond like gold,
> Rich with small lights, and tinted shadows
> Over and over all of her. . . .
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Her scented arms
> Lay like cool bindweed over against my neck.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> When slow rose-yellow moons looked out at night,

To guard the sheaves of harvest and mark down
The peach's fall, how calm she was and love-worthy!

. . . . . .

The salt of the whispers of my girl,
Murmurs of confused colors as we lay near sleep;
Little wise words and little witty words,
Wanton as water, honied with eagerness.

We may recall, here, another beautiful love-death, that of Wagner's Tristan and Yseult. The experience that became song for Chauras cost him his young life.

A brief notice only of the other book. The reason why we so much as mention *The Dark Mother* here is that we have found in this book what is very seldom to be found in a novel—poetry.

It is a book of sensitive health. The symbol for the first fifty pages might be a tall-stemmed flower quivering in a sweet even breeze. There is such delicacy, mixed with such extreme health, that we are reminded of the antennæ of insects:

The air moved toward the mountain; the waves and the trees and the earth moved toward the mountain. All the world moved gently upward toward the mountain like a tide. The mountain moved downward toward earth, spilled water and spread trees in it.

This David is a man of perfect senses, perfect eyes:

And David saw the breathing of the woods, the warm comfort of trees that had grown up together and knew their silences. They were clothed in a sweet sanctity of resolve and repose. They took the rain with faint bowed heads.

Lovers of poetry owe at least an acknowledgment to this book of honest prose, which is full of beautiful words—a real gardenful.

E. Carnevali

CELTIC FAIRIES

Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland (2 vols.), collected and arranged by Lady Gregory, with two essays and notes by W. B. Yeats. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Irish Fairy Tales, by James Stephens, illustrated by Arthur Rackham. Macmillan Co.

The Boy Apprenticed to an Enchanter, by Padraic Colum, illustrated by Dugald Stewart Walker. Macmillan Co.

Although the books here listed are not strictly in POETRY's province, their highly imaginative content places them so near it that we must recommend them briefly to our readers.

Lady Gregory's beautiful and scholarly work presents the raw material out of which the modern Irish poets, headed by Synge and Yeats, have shaped masterpieces, and from which their successors will continue to draw so long as there are Irish poets. In setting forth thus the "Celtic consciousness of an imminent supernaturalism," the distinguished editor uses the names and the exact language of the individuals who tell the tales, giving thus to her book the value of direct testimony, as well as the vigor and beauty of that folk-diction which Synge has immortalized. The scope of the work is indicated by such sectional sub-titles as *Sea Stories, Seers and Healers, The Evil Eye, Banshees and Warnings, Friars and Priest Cures.* Mr. Yeats' essays and notes are of course not only competent but sympathetic.

Mr. Stephens' beautiful book is a poet's retelling of some of the old Celtic folk-tales, tales handed down from long ago in the manner Lady Gregory's collection makes us under-

stand. It goes without saying that the tales are shaped into compact form by this close stylist without loss of simplicity and charm. And Mr. Rackham's illustrations are a return to his best manner and most imaginative mood.

This book and Mr. Colum's are for children in the sense only that some of the world's best literature has been so intended; but no grown-up who loves imaginative and poetic folk stories should deny himself the pleasure of such work by poets at play. One is "apprenticed to an enchanter" in reading Mr. Colum's book; and his paraphrases of the classic epics—Homer, the Norse sagas, etc.—may also be recommended to any child, young or old, as examples of vivid and beautiful imaginative prose. *H. M.*

A LITTLE SCHOOL FOR THE ELECT

The Little School, by T. Sturge Moore. Harcourt, Brace and Howe.

The little school for which Mr. Moore writes his lovely book is obviously the sort of school that an artist like Mr. Moore would plan. Its teacher would be a painter or engraver or poet, while the pupils would be girls and boys with the vision and the appreciation of the developing artist.

Naturally this is not the kind of school or book that children nourished on the red and yellow humor of Rudolph Dirks or even the monotonous wholesomeness of *The Youth's Companion* will greatly care for. It is too quiet, too reflective, too full of beauty. But this fact is not against it. The child with parent or teacher of sense and apprecia-

tion will find in the volume—perhaps not "realms of gold", but at least places where blow the many winds, always things of mystery to children and nōt to children alone; where, as Mr. Moore himself says,

> None comes, none goes,
> But the wind knows.

And the man or woman will find in the poems as much as the boy or girl; indeed, to almost any child, without guidance, the book is likely to be a bit recondite. *N. A. C.*

HOMESPUN

Rhymes of a Homesteader, by Elliott C. Lincoln. Houghton Mifflin Co.

This is a book of western verse, much of it of the homely familiar kind in dialect which passes current as good newspaper verse. It is hard to establish a line by which one can say of verse of this sort: This is a counterfeit of the genuine homespun, and this, on the other hand, is the real stuff. Several of the poems in this book rise above the counterfeit and approach the real thing, but the majority are written down with that careful colloquial carelessness which fails of its effect just because of its too apparent condescension. The naiveté of genuine folk homespun is not assumed. An author may achieve the folk quality because he is naive really; or he may achieve it through conscious simplicity; but not merely through rhyming dialect or colloquial nonchalance.

One may be severe on this score, because Mr. Elliott's best poems are so far beyond the rest. *Wheel Tracks, The Homesteader, The Sheepherder, Forty Below, The Chinook,* and *The Third Year* give promise of a much finer development of the author's talent. *A. C. H.*

MR. BYNNER'S SKIT

Pins for Wings, by Emanuel Morgan. The Sunwise Turn, New York.

Mr. Bynner must have had a beautiful time with himself working out these thumb-nail caricatures. There are too many for them all to be clever, of course; but a few have the delicate tang of wit.

"A hamadryad in the tree of knowledge" is not bad for Miss Millay, or "Overalls rhyming" for Walt Mason. "A cardinal on a merry-go-round" is still better, perhaps, for Mr. Chesterton. "A graphophone in the morgue" is only a half-success for Edgar Lee Masters, and "A colored postcard as Hamlet" does not quite hit off adequately the cruelly battered egoism of Cale Young Rice.

But the masterpiece of wit which would excuse a volume of failures, the portrait complete and satisfying which leaves nothing more to be said, is this of George Edward Woodberry:

> Grape-juice
> In the Holy Grail.

A word of praise also for Mr. Saphier's line-drawings, and for one or two of Mr. Opffer's sketches. *H. M.*

OUR CONTEMPORARIES

BOND OR FREE?

They are still talking about free verse—both pro and con; although the champions of both sides insist that the discussion is closed, and the poets continue to do as they please and get their poems printed. We commend to Mr. Tom Daly and other fulminators the following contribution to the controversy from a recent number of the *Mercure de France*. It is part of the theatrical review of Dec. 15, 1920, by Maurice Boissard:

To say that rhyme is poetry, that there is no poetry where there isn't rhyme, is to express the worst poetic routine. Let's take an example—José-Maria de Hérédia, if you will. You know the sonnets of *Trophées*. God knows that those lines rhyme, but is it poetry, in the true sense of the word? Not in the least. It is versification—extremely brilliant, we admit, but still mere versification. It is made for the eye, for the ear, not for the spirit or the soul. It is a sequence of *tours de force*, a show of patience, suggestively like certain complicated trinkets manufactured with tiny shells by meticulous maniacs. Do you want a more general argument? You certainly have read poems by foreign poets translated into French line by line and without any rhyme because the translator had in mind only the thought of being faithful to the significance of the poem itself. Have you felt the penetrating charm of these translations?—a charm due solely to the feeling expressed, to the landscape described; charm that the lack of rhyme left untouched, or even increased, by means of those essentially poetic elements: vagueness, imprecision, indecision, all that which is poetry itself. Rhyme, with its dryness, its regularity, its monotony, its mechanical quality and exterior brilliance, would have left nothing of that beauty; or at any rate would have decidedly impaired it. Rhyme is nothing but a poetic make-up, a way to look like poets for people who know no better than to make verses; and it is high time to follow the advice Verlaine gave, to *tordre enfin le cou à ce bijou d'un sou.*

Not only rhyme is not poetry, but moreover it is an encumbrance, an obstacle to poetry; for its sake the poet falsifies his inspiration.

Probably Mr. Daly's favorite magazine is *Scribner's,* for we read in one of its recent advertisements:

The four or more poems contained in a representative number of Scribner's are joyous, lyrical, and well-conceived. Such themes as the bird on the bough, summer in Arcady, the little silver strip of road, are preferred over grave or mournful subjects. Yet all poems must conform to a high standard of dignity and distinctiveness.

CORRESPONDENCE

CONCERNING "KORA IN HELL"

Dear POETRY:—Writers, quite as much in the countries of older art tradition as in America, may be divided into two classes: one the professionals, whose concern is style, technique, finished achievement; the other, those who attempt at least to explore and develop new experience. The former class restrict themselves generally to quite conventional themes; or, if they are very daring, develop for themselves new themes—about which they write "verses"—ultimately hardening into a manner, inherited or their own, and softening in so far as ability to penetrate deeply goes. Limiting ourselves strictly to America, we may mention such poets of the first class as Masters, Sandburg, Aiken—the list need stop short of only a very few names. Particularly with Sandburg may one be sure that he will take an image, and consciously sustain and develop it, long after he has lost poignant feeling for the validity of the image. He is a

professional writer. He has learned, in his own manner to be sure, how to use the image, the metaphor, the brutal truth, and the sentimental humanitarianism. So, starting out with the statement that the moon is a pot of gold mud, he must have that gold mud spread over worldly possessions, and of course at last a love-woman. He, and many others, seem to feel that it is necessary to write—if not an authentic poem, to write anyway. Unless from an impulse to say something keenly felt, writing is without justification.

Of this first group few pass from their adolescent rebellions and miseries into a more spiritual type of searching. Their discovery of experience is limited to material environment—the corn-fields, the marching men, small-town viciousness, the hog-butchers of industrialism. Outside, and perhaps controlling the forces back of these externalities, are more fundamental forces which they do not sense, forces which have a universal application, while retaining also a strictly local significance. The experience of the locality is after all that of the universe. The history of any individual relates itself with startling similarity to that of the age.

Today is a time of the breakdown of faiths amongst the so-called "sensitized" and "intellectuals." With the coming of the theory of evolution the more sublime metaphysical theories were gradually abandoned; pragmatism, with its doctrines concerning the usable realities, followed on to lubricate the joints of a mechanistic universe. However, where a few began to doubt the value of these "practical" answers before the war, literally thousands now doubt. Why

should we believe in evolution which does not explain involution, or the quite evident lack of progress? Have we anything to prove that physically and spiritually the human species is not on the retrograde? What is morality?—is non-morality a possibility? Dogmatized, it becomes at last a degenerate morality—must all ethics be individualized then? Many questionings, cynicisms, scoffings and doubtings attack all former judgments, and demand that their defenders prove their basis, and indicate clearly that it is something other than blind faith, or inward hunger rhapsodized into a proclamatory religion made out of dream-stuff. Ecstatic faith and prophetic exaltation are too primitive to be explainable in the religious instinct—for, say Whitman—to satisfy the diagnostic mind, and the psychologist.

Whatever certain groups or individuals may think or feel, the civilized peoples of the world are groping for some basis of faith: a faith in the mere value of living out their lives rather than a religious explanation of existence. But there is a new difficulty in their groping: they no longer trust logic, sequence, order—the intelligible, rational, deducible.

It is writers who are sensitive to this baseless way of accepting life, or rather tolerating it because life is what we have, who are developing the so-called "modern forms." Both *modern* and *form* are words that signify too much traditionally, and too little actually. To qualify, let me say I mean by modern that which is of the quality of today, displaying sensitive consciousness of the age's attitudes and

philosophies. By form I mean method of expression and conveyance, and I have no concern with any structural form—metrical, rhythmic, or geometric.

James Joyce with his prose first indicated the modern form. Possibly his style could be traced back to the oftentimes incoherent Rimbaud; the likeness here is purely a mode —the texture, quality of perception, attitude, and substance are quite different: the one has the mature detached mind; the other tossed himself with the seething of adolescence into the field of sophisticated discovery, and perhaps when adolescence and its ragings were over he would have relapsed into quite conventional or mediocre writing.

In America William Carlos Williams, and he beginning only with his improvisations entitled *Kora in Hell,* is conscious of the new form in relation to the dubiety of the day. Not agnosticism, for the agnostic will say "I can't know" decisively; we are simply doubting, and doubting whether we are right in doubting. There is in this book the spasmodic quality of the active, imaginative, alternately frightened and reckless, consciousness. One will search in vain for sequential outline; it is incoherent and unintelligible to —may I say the ordinary mind, though I dislike the superior implication of self which the phrase carries with it? (Since minds are so elusive, none is actually ordinary.) It is incoherent and unintelligible to those people with lethargy of their sensing organs. They look for the order and neatness of precise, developed thought. It is not there. *Kora in Hell* is accepted as a portrait of Williams' consciousness—a sort

Mr. Lee Wilson Dodd, who lives near New Haven, Conn., is the author of a number of plays and two books of verse. Of these the later is *The Middle Miles and Other Poems* (Yale University Press, 1915).

Mr. H. Thompson Rich, of Rutherford, N. J., has contributed to various magazines.

The other poets of this number appear for the first time in POETRY, and none of them has printed a volume as yet, so far as the editor is aware.

Elinor Wylie (Mrs. Horace Wylie), who lives in Washington, D. C., has contributed to other periodicals.

Mr. Edward Townsend Booth, of New York, served with the A. E. F., and later went to Ukrainia to do relief work.

Mr. Carroll Lane Fenton, whose specialty is paleontology, is now working at the Walker Museum, University of Chicago. He is a member of the U. of C. Poetry Club.

Grace Stone Coates (Mrs. Henderson Coates) lives in Martinsdale, Mont.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

Punch: the Immortal Liar, by Conrad Aiken. Alfred A. Knopf.

Verses, by William Grant McCooley, Jr. Privately printed, Milwaukee, Wis.

Pools of Glass and Other Poems, by Cyrus Caswell Johnson. Privately printed, Los Angeles, Cal.

Cactus Center, by Arthur Chapman. Houghton Mifflin Co.

The Broads—1919, by Hugh Money-Coutts. John Lane Co.

Forgotten Shrines, by John Chipman Farrar. (Yale Series of Younger Poets.) Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn.

Star-dust and Gardens, by Virginia Taylor McCormick. Plimpton Press, Norwood, Mass.

Borderlands, Kitchener of Khartoum and Other Poems, by Benj. C. Moomaw. Privately printed, Barber, Va.

The Choice of Paris and Other Poems, by D. C. Chase. Privately printed, Cedar Rapids, Ia.

The Attic of the Past and Other Lyrics, by Louis Ginsberg. Small, Maynard & Co.

Outlaws, by Nancy Cunard. Elkin Mathews, London.

Breakers and Granite, by John Gould Fletcher. Macmillan Co.

Poems, by Mary Allen Keller. Privately printed, Yorba Linda, Cal.

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Poetry

A Magazine of Verse

Edited by Harriet Monroe

May 1921

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VOL. XVIII
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SAPPHO ANSWERS ARISTOTLE

IMPULSIVE DIALOGUE

POET. Will you, like other men,
Offer me indigo indignities?
Undertaker. Indigo indignities!
The words are like a mermaid and a saint
Doubting each other's existence with a kiss.
Poet. The words of most men kiss
With satiated familiarity.
Indigo is dark and vehement,
But one word in place of two
Angers barmaids and critics.
Undertaker. Straining after originality,
You argue with its ghost!
A simple beauty, like morning

Harnessed by a wide sparkle
And plodding into the hearts of men,
Cannot reach your frantic juggling.

Poet. I can appreciate
The spontaneous redundancy of nature
Without the aid of an echo
From men who lack her impersonal size.

Undertaker. The sweeping purchase of an evening
By an army of stars;
The bold incoherence of love;
The peaceful mountain-roads of friendship—
These things evade your dexterous epigrams!

Poet. A statue, polished and large,
Dominates when it stands alone.
Placed in a huge profusion of statues,
Its outlines become humiliated.
Simplicity demands one gesture
And men give it endless thousands.
Complexity wanders through a forest,
Glimpsing details in the gloom.

Undertaker. I do not crave the dainty pleasure
Of chasing ghosts in a forest!
Nor do I care to pluck
Exaggerated mushrooms in the gloom.
I have lost myself on roads
Crossed by tossing hosts of men.
Pain and anger have scorched our slow feet:
Peace has washed our foreheads.

Poet. Futility, massive and endless,
Captures a stumbling grandeur
Embalmed in history.
In my forest you could see this
From a distance, and lose
Your limited intolerance.
Simplicity and subtlety
At different times are backgrounds for each other,
Changing with the position of our eyes. . . .
Death will burn your eyes
With his taciturn complexity.
Undertaker. Death will strike your eyes
With his wild simplicity!
Poet. Words are soldiers of fortune
Hired by different ideas
To provide an importance for life.
But within the glens of silence
They meet in secret peace. . . .
Undertaker, do you make of death
A puffing wretch forever pursued
By duplicates of vanquished forms?
Or do you make him a sneering king
Brushing flies from his bloodless cheeks?
Do you see him as an unappeased brooding
Walking over the dust of men?
Do you make him an eager giant
Discovering and blending into his consciousness
The tiny parts of his limitless mind?

Undertaker. Death and I do not know each other.
I am the stolid janitor
Who cleans the litter he has left
And claims a fancied payment.
Poet. Come to my fantastic forest
And you will not need to rise
From simple labors, asking death
For final wages.

EMOTIONAL MONOLOGUE

A man is sitting within the enigmatic turmoil of a railroad station. His face is narrow and young, and his nose, lips, and eyes, carved to a Semitic sharpness, have been sundered by a bloodless catastrophe. A traveling-bag stands at his feet. Around him people are clutching farewells and shouting greetings. Within him a monologue addresses an empty theatre.

I am strangling emotions
And casting them into the seats
Of an empty theatre.
When my lifeless audience is complete,
The ghosts of former emotions
Will entertain their dead masters.
After each short act
A humorous ghost will fly through the audience,
Striking the limp hands into applause,

And between the acts
Sepulchral indifference will mingle
With the dust upon the backs of seats.
Upon the stage a melodrama
And a travesty will romp
Against a back-drop of fugitive resignation.
Climax and anti-climax
Will jilt each other and drift
Into a cheated insincerity.
Sometimes the lights will retire
While a shriek and laugh
Make a martyr of the darkness.
When the lights reappear
An actor-ghost will assure the audience
That nothing has happened save
The efforts of a fellow ghost
To capture life again.
In his role of usher
Another ghost will arrange
The lifeless limbs of the audience
Into postures of relief.
Sometimes a comedy will trip
The feet of an assassin,
Declaring that if ghosts were forced
To undergo a second death
Their thinness might become unbearable.
At other times indignant tragedy
Will banish an intruding farce,

Claiming that life should not retain
The luxury of another laugh.
The first act of the play will show
The owner of the theatre
Conversing with the ghost of a woman.
As unresponsive as stone
Solidly repelling a spectral world,
His words will keenly betray
The bloodless control of his features.
He will say: "With slightly lowered shoulders,
Because of a knife sticking in my back,
I shall trifle with crowded highways,
Buying decorations
For an interrupted bridal-party.
This process will be unimportant
To the workshop of my mind
Where love and death are only
Colorless problems upon a chart."
The ghost of the woman will say:
"Your mind is but the rebellious servant
Of sensitive emotions
And brings them clearer dominance."
And what shall I mournfully answer?
I am strangling emotions
And casting them into the seats
Of an empty theatre.

FEMININE TALK

First Woman. Do you share the present dread
Of being sentimental?
The world has flung its boutonnière
Into the mud, and steps upon it
With elaborate gestures!
Certain people do this neatly,
Using solemn words for consolation:
Others angrily stamp their feet,
Striving to prove their strength.
Second Woman. Sentimentality
Is the servant-girl of certain men
And the wife of others.
She scarcely ever flirts
With creative minds,
Striving also to become
Graceful and indiscreet.
First Woman. Sappho and Aristotle
Have wandered through the centuries,
Dressed in an occasional novelty—
A little twist of outward form.
They have always been ashamed
To be caught in a friendly talk.
Second Woman. When emotion and the mind
Engage in deliberate conversation,
One hundred nightingales
And intellectuals find a common ground,

And curse the meeting of their slaves!
First Woman. The mind must only play
With polished relics of emotion,
And the heart must never lighten
Burdens of the mind.
Second Woman. I desire to be
Irrelevant and voluble,
Leaving my terse disgust for a moment.
I have met an erudite poet.
With a northern hardness
Motionless beneath his youthful robes.
He shuns the quivering fluencies
Of emotion, and shifts his dominoes
Within a room of tortured angles.
But away from this creative room
He sells himself to the whims
Of his wife, a young virago
With a calculating nose.
Beneath the flagrant pose
Of his double life
Emotion and the mind
Look disconsolately at each other.
First Woman. Lyrical abandon
And mental cautiousness
Must not mingle to a magic
Glowing, yet deliberate!
Second Woman. Never spill your wine
Upon a page of mathematics.

Drink it decently
Within the usual tavern.

PHILOSOPHICAL DIALOGUE

First Man. We gaze upon a negro shoveling coal.
His muscles fuse into a poem
Stifled and sinister,
Censuring the happy rhetoric of morning air.
Some day he may pitch his tent
Upon the ruins of a civilization,
Playing with documents and bottles of perfume
Found in deserted corridors.
Second Man. Listen to this song
Dipped in the Negro South of America.

She brought me collars and shoes.
She brought me whiskey and tea.
She brought me everything that I could use
But the jail-house key!

Time inserts the jail-house key
Into a succession of rusty locks,
Straining until they open.
Do you hear, beneath the rattling strut
Of this city, an imperceptible groan?
Time is turning the jail-house key.
They build larger jails for Time:

He makes larger keys of blood and iron,
But often the labor is delayed
By pausing squeals of freedom.

First Man. An insignificant jest
In the wider life of Time.
He has dropped to this earth
To play a barbarous comedy.
Philosophers loudly explain the scenes;
But poets, with greater restraint,
Tender them a masquerade.

Second Man. Once I sat and watched
A scientific philosopher
Place white lines on a black-board,
Diagraming his mighty system of logic.
While he worked, the wind outside
Squandered its derision
And offered him a cup he dared not drink.
Afterwards, in the open air,
The slash of rain on my face
Mockingly baptised his words.

First Man. To him the wind and rain
Were trivialities against a brick wall.

Second Man. To me they were tormented wanderers
Quarreling above a doll's house
Whose intricate patterns
Waited to be kicked aside.
I changed myself to a height
That made them whimpering pygmies,

And gave them grotesque costumes,
Enjoying the insolence of imagination.
First Man. The scientific philosopher
Raised his umbrella against the rain,
And communed with venerable argument.
Second Man. He was interested in improving
The lustre of a doll's house
In which I had left my small body.
Walls are enticing black-boards to some
And neglected prisons to others.
I prefer the second
Of tenuous bravado
That turns the prison into a threshold
And jests with the wind and rain that survive it.

Maxwell Bodenheim

THREE SONNETS

OLD WIVES' TALE

I saw my grandmother's shadow on the wall
In firelight; it danced with queer grimaces
As if her serious soul were making faces
At me or life or God or at us all.
And I, an urchin lying at her feet,
Then caught my first glimpse of the secret powers
That stir beneath this universe of ours,
Making a witches' carnival when they meet.
Across the firelit dusk my sensitive mood
Dreamed out to mingle with the waifs of Time
Whose unsolved stories haunt the poets' rhyme
And in dark streets of ancient cities brood—
Like sudden ghosts rising above the grime
With beauty and with terror that chills the blood.

HOLY WRIT

It does not seem so many years ago—
Those nights when I lay shivering in my bed
And saw the candle-light round my aunt's head
Casting its hazy sanctifying glow;
And heard her read strange story after story
Of Jonah, Adam, Moses, Esau, Ruth,

Of Solomon's old age and David's youth—
Things haunting, tender, terrible or gory.
Still can I see the Queen of Sheba's hair;
And all real lions are but mockery
To him who once knew Daniel's; there's no tree
That can with Eve's great Paradise Tree compare:
A golden light gleamed through that ancient air
That leaves me homesick in modernity.

THE BOOK OF LU T'ANG CHU

In the reign of the great Emperor Lu T'ang Chu
Wise men were ordered to inscribe in a book
All the great body of wisdom that men knew.
Today I turn the pages, and as I look
I cannot see anything very new or old,
And I wonder why it was worth the trouble, then,
Of days and nights and a thousand labors untold
Which the volume must have exacted from those wise men.
But still we write—and the Emperor now is blown
As grey dust over the limitless Asian plains.
Still we inscribe all that is humanly known,
Although no ruler honors us for our pains—
Recording a thousand wisdoms, all our own,
To celebrate our good and glorious reigns.

Arthur Davison Ficke

THREE POEMS

CHARMIAN'S SONG

I'm glad I have but a little heart—
  For my heart is very small:
It makes it free to come and go,
  And no one cares at all.

I give my heart for a tender look,
  For a gentle word or touch;
And the one who has it never knows,
  And it does not hurt me much.

If my heart were great and I gave it away,
  Then all the world would see;
But my heart is only a little thing
  And it does not trouble me.

I may give my little heart unseen,
  It is so small and light;
And only very wakeful things
  Can hear it cry at night.

FOR ALL LADIES OF SHALOTT

The web flew out and floated wide:
  Poor lady!—I was with her then.
She gathered up her piteous pride,
  But she could never weave again.

The mirror cracked from side to side;
  I saw its silver shadows go:
"The curse has come on me!" she cried.
  Poor lady!—I had told her so.

She was so proud, she would not hide;
  She only laughed and tried to sing.
But singing in her song she died;
  She did not profit anything.

THE HEART KNOWETH ITS OWN BITTERNESS

The heart knoweth? If this be true indeed,
  Then the thing that I bear in my bosom is not a heart,
For it knows no more than a hollow, whispering reed
      That answers to every wind.
  I am sick of the thing. I think we had better part.

My heart would come to any piper's calling—
  A fool in motley that dances for any king;
But my body knows, and its tears unbidden falling
      Say that my heart has sinned.
  You would have my heart? You may. I am sick of the thing.

Aline Kilmer

BACKWATER

A CHILDISH TALE

Listen to my childish tale:
  My heart was sad today;
My heart was so sad I could not find
  Anything to say.

I walked out to the city's edge
  Where the streets all disappear,
And I thought the fields were sad with me—
  Songless fields and drear.

I sat down under a maple tree
  That rose up lone and bare;
Its dying-colored leaves were strewn
  About me everywhere.

I sat and pondered aimlessly
  Under the silent tree,
I pondered sadly under the boughs
  That I thought were sad with me.

Then in a flash I felt a cool
  And steely serenity
Descending from those silent boughs—
  They were not sad with me.

And I felt the steely calm of their strength
  Slip in my heart like a breath,
And I was like a wakened man
  That had drowsed away in death.

I saw that steel was the maple-tree,
  It had never been sad with me;
I saw that the blue of the sky was steel
  In its cool serenity.

We were all steel out there in the field,
  We three beyond the town—
We three that were strong over the leaves
  Dying in red and brown.

Now you have heard my childish tale:
  My heart was sad today
And it lost its sadness under a tree.
  That is all I wanted to say.

THE OLD TOWN

Oh, let me not enter the old town,
  The straggling street!
Oh, I fear, I fear the going down
  On stumbling feet!

Oh, let me not grope down the dim way
  To the pitchy sea,

Unlit of a moon or a dim ray
  Through a cavernous tree.

All, all they will take from me
  By the black shore;
The ancients will steal me silently
  The purple I wore.

They will steal my love, they will steal my hate,
  I shall tremble bare;
They will make my body cold and straight
  And lay me there

Where my childhood sleeps forever and ever.
  Oh, I fear,
I fear the town that ever and ever
  I'm coming near.

X

OVERLOOKED

I was nothing, though I had a kind of pain or feeling—
  I knew her hair—
I think it might be said I knew too well, but I was nothing
  To her but air.

That other one, he knew her eyes with only half a knowing—
  I knew her eyes—
I think it might be said I knew too well whom he was loving.
  Yes, he was wise.

Oh well, and they are wed—I might indulge in grieving or
in smiling—
I hardly dare.
You see, it wasn't very much I was to her—nothing,
Nothing but air.

SHE SITS VACANT-EYED

Surely, surely, there is something for me,
There is something to fill my spirit's measure.
Winds tell, rains tell—
Somewhere, somewhere is my treasure.

They promised it me when a raven spoke
Back in the reaches of maidenhood.
He spoke for God, he spoke well—
I am groping for what I then understood.

Ten thousand pathways ran to treasure—
The raven spoke, I saw the vision.
Suns burn, moons burn—
God, God! I am sitting in prison!

Surely, surely, there is something for me—
There is something to fill my spirit whole.
Sun, burn! sun, burn!
Pity me, make a blaze of my soul!

Edward Sapir

TONIGHT

SNOW

This night my body is an offering—
I am carried to you.
Years I was near you
And you were far.
But tonight of all nights
Was not the night
To be parted.

I would fain go forth
And seek you,
And sink down by you,
As the flakes falling outside
Sink into the cushioned ground.

And that which is me
Is also a field
Glowing and boundless.

PRESENCE

You. Your presence. Why can I not dip into your presence as I dip into sleep, clasp it and bask in it? How hold it? How savour it? It is more than I wanted. And less.

Muriel Ciolkowska

Now you have left—you, in whose presence I would steep, around whose presence I hover like a gull over the lake. And, ere I have tasted it, your presence is no more your presence.

You have left. You have returned to me. Your presence no longer disturbs me from you.

Muriel Ciolkowska

OFF THE HIGHWAY

Lilacs lift leaves of cool satin
And blossoms of mother-of-pearl
Against the tarnished silver of the deserted house.
Tall, exquisite grasses fill the door-yard with spray.
Through the sun-drenched fragrance drifts the hazy monotone of bees.
Tints of opal and jade; the hush of emerald shadows,
And a sense of the past as a living presence
Distil a haunting wistful peace.

Julia Weld Huntington

PAGEANTRY

REVELATIONS

Crystals of light,
Like raindrops,
Beat down about my head;
And I kneel low to receive them
Reverently.

POISE

I must step
From star to star
Amid the shadowed planets
That hang in the profound deepness
Of bottomless space,
With thin clouded draperies
Filming about my feet
In eddies of motion.
My path is as wide
As the pageantry of worlds
That fling themselves out
In the dance of fettered motion;
And I shall stride
As though all were still.

Amy Bonner

CHARLOTTE BRONTE

On reading her letters to M. Héger

O proud! O passionate! what desperate pain
  Subdued that haughty soul, that iron will—
  Bowed that stiff neck, wore that wild spirit, till
It bit the dust, and, broken, rose again!

What feverish, trembling fingers held the pen
  Which traced those delicate characters—the cry
  Of one too hungry-hearted, plain and shy,
Baffled and stung by the strange moods of men.

Discarded fragments, eloquent and rare,
  Carelessly torn by man without regret;
  Roughly sewn up, with some parts missing yet,
How many a woman's heart lies bleeding there!

Blanche Dismorr

TRAILING ARBUTUS

Why do you hide beneath the pines, and cling to earth,
  Infrequent, foolish flower of fragrant breath?
Your blossoms fresh and pink, like babies at their birth;
  Your twigs as brown and brittle as old women at their
    death.

Ruth Mason Rice

LONG DAYS

I have watched long days of dawning,
  And long, long nights of dread;
And I am a little weary
  Of traveling toward the dead.
When I looked out last evening
  I thought the wan moonlight
Seemed tired and pale with shining,
  A lantern in the night.

I heard them whisper this morning
  As I heard them yesterday,
"Do you think she will last much longer,
  Dragging along this way?
Her hands are like withered flowers,
  Her face is a strange dried leaf;
She has stayed too long in her body,
  She is wheat turned dust in the sheaf."

HEAPHY HERSELF

When Heaphy, the old woman,
Is not looking,
Herself trips lightly off to Donegal
And there dances in the shadow of Slieve.

When Heaphy, the old woman,
Is looking,

Dorothy McVickar

Herself has never a chance at the dancing,
But stays in the kitchen
Mopping the floor.

Dorothy McVickar

YOUTH AND AGE

Youth has music on his lips
  And in his hurrying feet,
Rhythm in his finger-tips
  And in his laughter sweet.

Age has silence on his tongue—
  Never a note or sound;
But his heart is often wrung
  By music all around.

Youth has tongue, but lacks an ear—
  He whistles, pipes and sings.
Age is still, but he can hear
  Silence and growing things.

Elizabeth Hart Pennell

REPETITIONS

I plunge at the rearing hours—
Life is a steed of pride,
Who so high above me towers
I cannot mount and ride.

TWO SEWING

The wind is sewing with needles of rain;
With shining needles of rain
It stitches into the thin
Cloth of earth—in,
In, in, in.
(Oh, the wind has often sewed with me!—
One, two, three.)

Spring must have fine things
To wear, like other springs.
Of silken green the grass must be
Embroidered. (One and two and three.)
Then every crocus must be made
So subtly as to seem afraid
Of lifting color from the ground.
And after crocuses the round
Heads of tulips, and all the fair
Intricate garb that Spring will wear
The wind must sew with needles of rain,
With shining needles of rain

Stitching into the thin
Cloth of earth—in,
In, in, in—
For all the springs of futurity.
(One, two, three.)

INSTRUCTION

My hands that guide a needle
  In their turn are led
Relentlessly and deftly,
  As a needle leads a thread.

Other hands are teaching
  My needle; when I sew
I feel the cool, thin fingers
  Of hands I do not know.

They urge my needle onward,
  They smooth my seams, until
The worry of my stitches
  Smothers in their skill.

All the tired women,
  Who sewed their lives away,
Speak in my deft fingers
  As I sew today.

THREE SONGS FOR SEWING

I

A fibre of rain on a window-pane
  Talked to a stitching thread:
In the heaviest weather I hold together
    The weight of a cloud!

To the fibre of rain on a window-pane
  The talkative stitches said:
I hold together with the weight of a feather
    The heaviest shroud!

II

My needle says: Don't be young,
  Holding visions in your eyes,
Tasting laughter on your tongue!—
  Be very old and very wise,
And sew a good seam up and down
In white cloth, red cloth, blue and brown.

My needle says: What is youth
  But eyes drunken with the sun,
Seeing farther than the truth;
  Lips that call, hands that shun
The many seams they have to do
In white cloth, red cloth, brown and blue!

III

One by one, one by one,
Stitches of the hours run
  Through the fine seams of the day;
Till like a garment it is done
  And laid away.

One by one the days go by,
And suns climb up and down the sky;
  One by one their seams are run—
As Time's untiring fingers ply
  And life is done.

COWARDICE

Discomfort sweeps my quiet, as a wind
Leaps at trees and leaves them cold and thinned.
Not that I fear again the mastery
Of winds, for holding my indifference dear
I do not feel illusions stripped from me.
And yet this is a fear—
A fear of old discarded fears, of days
That cried out at irrevocable ways.
I cower for my own old cowardice—
For hours that beat upon the wind's broad breast
With hands as impotent as leaves are: this
Robs my new hour of rest.

I thought my pride had covered long ago
All the old scars, like broken twigs in snow;
I thought to luxuriate in rich decay,
As some far-seeing tree upon a hill;
But, startled into shame for an old day,
I find that I am but a coward still.

FLASH

I am less of myself and more of the sun;
The beat of life is wearing me
To an incomplete oblivion,
Yet not to the certain dignity
Of death. (They cannot even die
Who have not lived.)
The hungry jaws
Of space snap at my unlearned eye,
And time tears in my flesh like claws.

If I am not life's, if I am not death's,
Out of chaos I must re-reap
The burden of untasted breaths.
(Who has not waked may not yet sleep.)

Hazel Hall

COMMENT

SOUTHERN SHRINES

EVERY traveler may be his own Columbus; for every journey is a voyage of discovery, leading, mayhap, to the promised land. The editor, setting out for a few talks about poetry in the warm and mellow South, discovered rich quarries in the blossoming landscape and ships of magic ready to set sail from the shores—all guarded by local loyalties jealously excited and aware.

In other words, she seemed to find a stirring of new beauty in the hearts of the people as well as in the spring-garlanded fields and hills; and an enthusiasm of preparation —a feeling of expectancy, as if efflorescence must be as simple and inevitable in art as in nature. Sow the seed, till the soil, and the harvest will surely follow—such would seem to be the faith of the new South, the South which loves its traditions but refuses to be enslaved by them, which is not satisfied to sit in colonial houses and contemplate its historic and romantic past.

To be sure, there are spinsters in Charleston and Savannah who still live on tea and toast in the midst of faded splendor rather than sell ancestral portraits by Sully and Romney, or even a single mahogany hautboy or old Lowestoft plate; *grandes dames* of the old régime who stay indoors rather than replace the carriage-and-pair with an automobile. And there are college professors to whom Sidney Lanier uttered the last audible word of poetry; who even, in extreme cases, re-

sent the present neglect of Timrod. But the nephews and nieces and grandchildren of these ultra-loyalists are forming poetry and art societies and little-theatre enterprises, and inviting up-to-date people like Carl Sandburg and Daniel A. Reed to help give them a good start. And they are aiming at a frank expression of the locale in their exhibitions and poems and play-productions—a special stress which is much to be desired, because the beauty of that moss-hung landscape, and the dramatic contrasts of feeling in the spirit of the bi-racial people, are a sufficient basic motive for putting those south-eastern Atlantic states more adequately on the modern artistic map.

Columbia, South Carolina, was the first full-stop of the editor's pilgrimage. In its little Town Theatre, the adroit reformation of a quaint old house, Mr. Reed, trained in the Chicago Little Theatre and seconded by a group of enthusiasts, is offering a generous hospitality to all the arts. Plays, exhibitions, lectures, readings, musicals, all find audience-room here and a congenial atmosphere of challenging sympathy. Even the quiet old University of South Carolina, a few steps away up the hill, seems to welcome this modern interloper into the old state capital, and to cooperate in the stirring-up process which its presence implies. And it is not easy to be stirred up under the languid southern sun, in towns whose every old mossy brick and stone is sacred but whose occasional sky-scraper seems an anachronism.

Proud Charleston was the second stage—Charleston, as

indomitable as ever, as unchangeably a beautiful great lady of heroic spirit and aspect. What Charleston wills she does: not in the bravoura Chicago manner, by a bubbling-up of helter-skelter democratic forces; but by a haughty wave of her queenly hand, the grand gesture of the assured aristocrat who never dreams of denial. Today she wills the arts: she is restoring her old houses, summoning her painters to local exhibitions, and creating the Poetry Society of South Carolina, with its two hundred members professional and amateur, and its critical committees to pass on poems and award numerous prizes. Du Bose Heyward, Beatrice Ravenel and others are leaders in this effort to turn the local ambition toward the arts; also one or two painters who recognize the pictorial charm of the colonial houses with their grilled gateways, and of the moss-draped, semi-tropical landscape.

The wealth of historic tradition and association in Charleston may well be a hope and an agony in the heart of any poet who loves her, for no art has yet expressed it adequately. The old houses bring something of it home to us—houses spaciously planned for patriarchal slave-holding families, stately enough for eighteenth-century banquets, and of an elegance befitting the crinoline of Victorian emotions; houses therefore inconsiderate of modern needs, imprisoning many a pathetic comedy of servantless impecuniosity, and perhaps now and then a tragedy of some free spirit beating its wings against ancient barriers. One wonders at neither excess of loyalty, so beautiful is the curve of old mansions along the Battery against the wide blue water of the harbor,

so full of charm are the fading memories, the lavender-scented relics, of more leisurely, better-mannered days.

If Charleston is a great lady, Savannah is a fine one. Charleston commands, and Savannah persuades. She is tempted to sit dreaming over her past, to linger in the two old moss-hung graveyards whose mournful beauty is a wonder-story all over the world.. Children were romping in the Colonial Cemetery while I scanned its eloquent monuments, but they avoided the most eloquent of all—that bitter memorial of a suicide, with four coiled serpents carved in the four-square stone, under the inverted marble urn, as the only record of a nameless agonist. But Savannah does not forget that she is one of the great ports of the world, with all Spanish America to the south of her; and now and then she salutes the future with a sky-scraper. Or even with a poetry society—a little one, The Prosodists she calls it, to show that its five members are students of technique.

Jacksonville is frankly modern, with more sky-scrapers than colonial houses. And the cause of modern poetry, of modern art, is eagerly sponsored by the Round Table Club, whose membership is both professional and amateur. Marx G. Sabel, whose second POETRY group will appear in June, is one of its officers.

From young Jacksonville it is only an hour or two by motor to old St. Augustine. But even in St. Augustine the invading tourist demands a compromise between old and new; and gets a swept and garnished, guide-regulated museum-fort, a quaint little gate-guarded ancient street for his

modern trinket-shops, and numerous ultra-modern hotels disguised in pseudo-Spanish architecture. St. Augustine is on the high-road; in full-season it seems less atmospheric than San Antonio, and far less intact than drowsy old Santa Fe, still lisping Spanish to her aboriginal pueblos. But it has corners to which one may retire with the past—a little old graveyard, an ancient church or two, certain mossy walls. And perhaps the most wonderful corner of all is that barrel-vaulted guardroom of the old fort whose damp masonry is fringed to the top with delicate maidenhair.

A contrasting episode though ultra-modern seemed blessed with timelessness, like all other simple and elemental experiences. This was a flight in a passenger aeroplane over the white sands and blue water of Atlantic Beach. The sensation?—oh, merely a feeling of being joyously at ease, like a bird, as we sailed slowly through the warm, blue sky, and looked down at the fishes in the rippling sea and the automobiles crawling over the long white strip of sand, and at the cottage roofs and the stretch of marsh with its ribbon-twist of river. It seemed strange that men had waited these thousands of years to do a thing so natural, so inevitable.

From Jacksonville I followed the northward trail of the blossoming spring, stopping at Atlanta's suburb, Decatur, for a day in the Agnes Scott College, which has a course in modern poetry; and at Bowling Green, Kentucky, where new oil-wells are piercing the century-old farms, and new ideas the patriarchal before-the-war traditions; and finally at Louisville, where Cale Young Rice, Hortense Flexner

King and others keep the muse's fires alight, and where Otto A. Rothert, convinced that Madison Cawein was one of the immortals, is devoting years to the preparation of a monumental *Life and Letters* complete enough to satisfy the demands of the poet's vociferous future fame.

The journey was another reminder of the variety and potential richness of culture, of imaginative and spiritual life, in these far-flung United States. The problem is, of course, to make the local loyalties generously productive and creative instead of narrowly exclusive and prejudicial, to sweep away hindrances between the imaginative energy of elect souls and the adequate expression of that energy in the arts and in life. The energy is there—of that I was once more convinced during this southern journey; but against its vital force rise always the dead walls of conservative repression.

The people, there as elsewhere, must learn that beauty is created from within—it cannot be inherited from the past or imported from over-seas, or manufactured for passive minds by theatrical and movie syndicates and subserviently popular writers and artists. It is an achievement of the individual soul; and if the individual soul fails to achieve it, to create its own beauty in some one of the innumerable art-impulses or spiritual impulses of life, something within that soul turns to dust and ashes. And what is true of the individual is true of the group: hand-me-down art and literature, hand-me-down ethics, morals, politics—the ready-made everywhere, the self-created crowded out, speeded away—this is the dusty-ashen threat against our modern civilization.

H. M.

THE DEATH OF "B. L. T."

"The Line" came to a full stop with the passing of Bert Leston Taylor on the nineteenth of March. Who now will carry on "the column that made Chicago famous," the column of wit and wisdom founded in the old *Record* by Eugene Field of happy memory, and built up in the *Tribune* as a finely whimsical all-American monument by the genial genius who has gone?

It would be difficult to set bounds to the influence of this witty wise man, who so modestly, so humanely, so urbanely, disguised in kindly humor his good judgment and good taste. The warmth of his sympathy mellowed the penetrating keenness of his satire—he never expected too much of "the so-called human race," and always felt himself a fellow-offender in its inexplicable derelictions and vagaries.

In music, art, literature he was a sane and penetrating critic; a word in "The Line" went further than many long reviews to set some clamorous best-seller in its place or promote some shy work of beauty. His column was an open book of the amenities; Henry Kitchell Webster, in his memorial address, called it a daily letter to his friends, classing him with Gray and Fitzgerald among the great letter-writers of the world.

But he ranks also, with Frederick Locker and Austin Dobson, with Oliver Wendell Holmes and Thomas Bailey Aldrich and Eugene Field among the best of the ever-to-be-gratefully-remembered lyrists of the drawing-room and—no, we don't have drawing-rooms now-a-days—of the living-

room and library. One might quote an hundred poems to prove it; we choose *Canopus* because it is, not better than many others, but possibly a keener self-revelation:

When quacks with pills political would dope us,
  When politics absorbs the livelong day,
I like to think about the star Canopus,
  So far, so far away.

Greatest of visioned suns, they say who list 'em;
  To weigh it science always must despair.
Its shell would hold our whole dinged solar system,
  Nor ever know 'twas there.

When temporary chairmen utter speeches,
  And frenzied henchmen howl their battle hymns,
My thoughts float out across the cosmic reaches
  To where Canopus swims.

When men are calling names and making faces,
  And all the world's ajangle and ajar,
I meditate on interstellar spaces
  And smoke a mild seegar.

For after one has had about a week of
  The arguments of friends as well as foes,
A star that has no parallax to speak of
  Conduces to repose.

Thus one felt heights and depths in this man, against which he measured sublunary affairs. His gayest word was always in scale, always had perspective. So it is not surprising that he was thoroughly at home in the woods and all wild places of nature, as some of the finest of his more serious poems—*The Road to Anywhere,* for example—prove.

He died in the spring-time, as he wished. Let us hope that the white-throat, whose music "is sweet as April's sun," will sing over his grave. *H. M.*

THE POET AND MODERN LIFE

The problems confronting the modern poet are exceedingly complex. How can poetry, which is essentially order, affirmation, achievement, be created in an age, a *milieu,* of profound doubt and discouragement? How is it possible to build up a "spiritual monument" when the most necessary elements are lacking—in a period of social disorder, mental anarchy, when so very few are at all concerned with intellectual progress and so many are utterly bounded by material progress? How, again, is the poet to obtain the ideas and knowledge which are the matter he works with, when he is simply confused by an immeasurable discord, a vast unsynthesized knowledge? And does not this situation, undeniable, I think, and so much more acute than it was fifty years ago, lend strength to Matthew Arnold's pessimism, and force us to conclude that now, if ever, must be an age of criticism, an age of pure conservation, if any intellectual life is to survive the dying of the Renaissance? The narrow ideas of comfort and utilitarianism, which are the motive force of the contemporary revolution, must of necessity be unfruitful in the larger sphere of the mind. In our progress we have become curiously abased; from the Hellenic dream of god-like man in harmony with nature, from the mediaeval dream of man transcending nature through religion, from the Renaissance dream which infused a new life into Hellenism, from those centuries when the life of the senses and the intelligence struggled with the life of the spirit and sentiment, we have fallen into an apathy of discouragement

where we hope for no more than that each individual should conform to "modern standards of living." Man exists spiritually as he conceives of himself; and the modern world conceives of man, through a vague deceptive mist of "social reform," as an animal which eats, drinks, is clothed, travels and needs to be amused; add to this a little confused "education," a little tepid "religion," and a fair amount of ancient superstition revived as "new thought," and you get a not too incorrect picture of the modern world and its motives. Deep spiritual enthusiasm and energy, disinterested thought, unfettered intelligence, profound culture, where will you find a combination of these essentials of poetry?

Meanwhile we go on writing, many just echoing the words of their predecessors, some trying to strike out rough new images of vitality, a few trying to add to mere vitality the mellowness of culture, the permanence of intelligence. Certain writers, impatient with that mere aping of a vanished order which is unhappily the mark of modern poetry in England, have thrown violently aside the reflective, the intellectual aspects of their art to create something which is essentially only vital. This is preferable to stagnation, but it is not nearly enough. I should like to see that vitality more mellow, saturated with fertile ideas, enlightened; for so far it has done little but interpret a violent material activity. How indeed could it do more? The essential elements are lacking, for without an intelligent, enlightened, cultivated *milieu* each poet speaks into pandemonium, loses himself in confusion or in egotism, in provincialism. *R. A.*

REVIEWS

PASTELS

Poems, by Haniel Long. Moffat, Yard & Co.

In this slim volume Haniel Long presents his rhymed lyrics in their various colors—pastel transparents, romantic and oriental opaques. We miss the free-verse student sketches, which Alfred Kreymborg includes in his *Others for 1919.* As usual the free-verse medium seems to make the poet relax and be natural; in it Mr. Long sees and feels with clean honest lines, washing in his emotions with their own colors. In the best of his rhymed lyrics, he works through a group of imperfect songs played on pipes rather than on a lute or a lyre. In this group—*Madness, Midnight Sun, With Compliments, Song of Young Burbage, The Winter Sprite, I Gather Treasures of the Dark*—each has a promise which unfolds to an art achievement in a pagan pastoral idyl of real beauty, *The Herd Boy:*

The night I brought the cows home
  Blue mist was in the air;
And in my heart was heaven,
  And on my lips a prayer.

I raised my arms above me,
  I stretched them wide apart,
And all the world was pressing
  In beauty on my heart.

The lane led by a river
  Along an ancient wood,
And ancient thoughts came softly,
  As with the leaves they should.

I hung the cows with garlands,
  And proud they walked before;
While mother-naked after,
  A laurel branch I bore.

The other poems in this vein go scurrying through surfaces painted in transparents over nothing, rhyming insignificantly. The poet's attempt at wilder pagan freedom is weakened by a natural love for pastoral restraint—or is it an academic inhibition?

Mr. Long's more colorful dipping into the romantic is rather limp, and in the panoramic his sweep is tight. *The Death of Alexander the Great* lacks the freedom and flare of pageantry, which we find quite glorious in his free-verse *Student* group, when he would have his girl enter his

class-room window
On the elephant's trunk.

In his rhymed pageantry it is as if he were trying to blow a fanfare of trumpets on his pipes. However in *Dead Men and the Moon, Dead Men Tell No Tales,* and *His Deaths,* there is the swagger and color of truth romantically expressed, perhaps romance truthfully expressed.

The Cuban in the States lacks Spanish feeling and interest. The pitch is too high in his remote tropical effects, the tone too thin, the touch too cool, not enough of the green-eyed serpent subtleties. *There Was a City Where Serpents Writhed* comes nearer finding the remote than *Gifts.* And the war poems are too personal—they look puny against the conflict. War is a stride in the ages, an impressionistic record from a gigantic panorama. *Laura Sherry*

SILENCE AWAKENING

Terra Italica, by Edward Storer. The Egoist, London.

Mr. Edward Storer is not typical of the English poets of today; he may have some of their virtues and weaknesses, but he has others which are peculiar to himself. He is English in his clinging to decoration, to suavity; he is English in a kind of inarticulateness which prevents his saying all the fine things that are in him; but he is un-English in his profound and unaffected love of beauty, he is un-English inasmuch as he hates quaintness. The rough strength of the "vital" poet is not his; when he tries to interpret modern life he fails because this life is so alien, so hostile to his subtler conceptions. He makes me think of some pupil of Heine, intoxicated by Heine's adoration of Hellenic beauty, but most un-German in that the ideas he works with are very few and simple. Moreover that English love of decoration leads him away from Heine's fine simplicity; though one feels how Mr. Storer struggles against this national vice, how he has lived with the classics to purge and lighten his mind of all the sluggish barbarity still adhering to the English character. His earlier work, fragile and imaginative, lacked strength but never sweetness; his new book retains this Ovid-like sweetness and has gained strength, the strength of brevity and thought ,and therefore it is his best. Intentionally or unintentionally he had criticised his own poetry in these words:

> It is so near to silence as to seem
> Silence awakening,

A listening rather sweet;
A mood evaporating
That has entered in
To all your spirit
Numbing it with peace,
Oozed to the very core of you
With ethereal sweet;
A vaporous light,
Luminance rarified,
Yet dewy with the sap of earth;
Bitter a little
From the great salt sea.

But let me not be misunderstood; in pointing to a "weakness" in this fine highly-wrought poetry I do not mean to imply any inferiority to the poetry of vitality. The weakness in Mr. Storer's poetry is the weakness of much thought, much emotion, much living; of a cultivated mind turning in disappointment and discouragement from the present to linger in imagination over the happier past, with a charm, a lightness, an elegance wholly delightful. The melancholy, the skepticism, the discouragement of these poems, their sad devotion to a lost ideal of beauty, their haunting insistence on the Horatian theme of

the dream called life,
Rosy with a little love,
Quick with sharp sorrows—

are certainly delightful to react to in certain moods, yet typical of that unavowed but deep despair which holds so many sensitive minds in a distracted Europe. *R. A.*

COUNTRY SENTIMENT

Fairies and Fusiliers, and *Country Sentiment,* by Robert Graves. Alfred A. Knopf.

The poetry of Robert Graves compares with the mass of good modern poetry, especially in the United States, as the trim, well-ordered English farm compares with the vast cattle ranch of Wyoming or the great wheat farm of North Dakota. Mr. Graves has chosen a small field, withal one chosen by many English poets before him. He tills it well, and it brings forth lovely blossoms if not always luscious, satisfying fruit.

Melody, everyday humanness, fancy, quiet whimsy, chivalry—these are words that come to mind as one reads Mr. Graves' verse. They represent qualities found in Skelton, in Surrey, or in Herrick, poets in whose tradition Mr. Graves would probably class himself. One gets the impression that the author studies rather than observes, as when the boy stays away from church and goes walking—

> To ponder there in quiet
> God's Universal Plan.

These are the boy's own words! Such boys exist only in eighteenth-century English paintings.

Generally, however, Mr. Graves presents clear, vivid pictures, as in *Finland:*

> The skies are jewelled all around,
> The ploughshare snaps in the iron ground.
> The Finn, with face like paper
> And eyes like a lighted taper,
> Hurls his rough rune

At the wintry moon,
And stamps to mark the tune.

Country Sentiment shows an advance over the author's first book in story-telling and dramatic power, in hardness and cleanness of expression:

Here they lie who once learned here
All that is taught of hurt or fear.
Dead, but by free will they died:
They were true men, they had pride.

Nelson Antrim Crawford

RECENT ANTHOLOGIES

The Oxford and Cambridge Miscellany: June, 1920. Basil Blackwell, Oxford, England.

A Queen's College Miscellany. Queen's College, Oxford.

A Treasury of War Poetry. Second Series, edited by George Herbert Clarke. Houghton Mifflin Co.

Dreams and Voices, compiled by Grace Hyde Trine. The Woman's Press, New York.

Joyful Sorrow, compiled by L. H. B. E. P. Dutton & Co.

Lillygay: an Anthology of Anonymous Poems. The Vine Press, Steyning, England.

American and British Verse from The Yale Review. Yale University Press.

Modern British Poetry, edited by Louis Untermeyer. Harcourt, Brace & Howe.

Contemporary Verse Anthology, edited by Charles Wharton Stork. E. P. Dutton & Co.

The above list is a slight indication of the present rush

of anthologies; and incidentally it is proof of a public for modern poetry: a public, however, too eager for pre-digested food, too eager to lean upon the opinions of editors and publishers. Perhaps this is inevitable—in these crowded days no one can read everything, even in one specialty. But the public should choose its anthologies carefully, avoiding those whose motives are frankly commercial.

Our list may be divided into four groups: The first includes those anthologies intended to introduce a group of young poets connected by similar ideals, or perhaps merely by acquaintance or propinquity; second, subject anthologies; third, résumés of a period or a locale; fourth, reprints from special magazines.

Under the first heading there is no suspicion of a commercial motive. The poems included in such collections may be well or ill chosen: the new claimants for the laurel may be raw or crude, affected or supersophisticated; or they may be young geniuses trying their wings; but at least the publisher is making room for the unknown and taking a gambler's chance with the public. The first two titles listed above are of this kind; and although neither pamphlet contains any very exciting evidences of genius, a variety of talent—fictional, critical, limnal and musical, as well as poetic—is displayed in an admirable typographic setting. The two miscellanies, though of recent work, are not confined to undergraduates, the first including names like Robert Graves and Edith Sitwell. In poetry the most—I had almost said the only—interesting exhibits are in a mood of

sarcasm verging on the grotesque—*Absinthe* by Royston D. Campbell, *The Survivor* by Godfrey Elton, and this bit of satire by E. W. Jacot:

Jabez Q., the millionaire,
Has oozy hands, dead lichen hair;
A grey rag eye—no spark is there.

He also has a garden close,
Where Jabez likes to think he grows
The most expensive kinds of rose.

Once he puffed a ring of smoke
Towards the stars; it spread, it broke,
Disintegrated past revoke.

Jabez watched it; hiccoughed "Gee!"
Then shuddered . . . what if he
Became like this—vacuity?

When his body—horrid doubt—
Suffered this atomic rout,
Would it . . .
His cigar was out

"Waal," said Jabez, "I'm doggoned!"—
And pitched it in the lily-pond.

Of the subject anthologies, the second series of Mr. Clarke's *Treasury of War Poetry* is mostly depressing reading; apparently the first series gathered the cream, leaving for this, with of course a few notable exceptions, skim milk. The book seems to represent the war-muse's too-sober second thought—neither her first fierce inspiration nor her final verdict.

Dreams and Voices, a book of parental and filial poems by modern poets of varying quality; and *Joyful Sorrow,* with entries, chiefly by British poets past and present, intended to

cheer up those who grieve—these are two curious examples of publishers' efforts to attract a special public. *Lillygay: An Anthology of Anonymous Poems,* is more intriguing, with its lively little wood-cuts by Eric and Percy West. Its cheering lyrics and ballads must be centuries old—at least some of them are, the beautiful *Lyke-wake Dirge* for example; and no reviewer would be mean-spirited enough to guess at a later origin for others.

Of our third class, Mr. Untermeyer's *Modern British Poetry* is the only example. It is a companion to his rather elementary *Modern American Poetry,* both running from 1870 to 1920, and being intended especially for young students. In the latter case one was forced to wonder at the poor showing of a rich period, but the British volume may be a little more satisfactory.

In our fourth class, of magazine anthologies, the *Yale Review* book opens with *The Passing Strange,* one of Mr. Masefield's finest meditative poems; and its other entries—by Messrs. Robinson, Frost, Fletcher, Sassoon, Mmes. Teasdale, Wharton, and other poets—show that this magazine has done generous work in this department.

As good manners would almost debar us from reviewing the anthology of our most steadfast fellow-specialist in modern poetry, we shall permit the editor of *Contemporary Verse,* Mr. Charles Wharton Stork, to speak for himself in regard to his anthology, which brings together the more notable poems from several years' issues of his magazine. In the *Introduction* he says:

Most of the other magazines, we thought, were over-stressing the appeal of novelty. We believed that the growing power of American poetry could be shown to express itself in forms that an average person could enjoy. . . . The great universal motives of the race—love of home, delight in outdoor nature, generous human sympathy, kindly humor, and a quiet, first-hand religious sense—all of these will be found in abundance.

However,

A moderate number of free-verse ventures have been included, where genuineness of feeling and beautiful handling of its changing rhythms have seemed to justify the exceptions.

And the editor inquires:

Where, one may ask, is one likely to find more American idealism than in a volume such as this?

Perhaps one may question Mr. Stork's conclusion. He says:

The American people has a right to ask that poetry should express the thoughts and emotions of this generation in a style which can be widely understood and appreciated.

Do poets worthy of the name take orders, even from that formidable connoisseur, "the American people"?

The haphazard arrangement of the book makes appraisement difficult—the poems are quite ungrouped, whether by subjects or authorship. However, one may find, by searching, Joyce Kilmer's gay dialogue, *The Ashman,* Edwin Ford Piper's *Gee-up dar, Mules,* and a few fine lyrics—by Sara Teasdale, E. Merrill Root, Marx G. Sabel, Helen Hoyt and one or two others. *H. M.*

FRENCH POETS IN ENGLISH

Fleurs de Lys, translated and edited by Wilfred Thorley. Houghton Mifflin Co.

The introduction to this anthology is so lucid and complete that the reader expects equally competent translations. It sets forth briefly, but well, a history of the poets of France from the thirteenth century to the present day, showing how their personalities were affected by their times, analyzing their methods of work and estimating their values in as fair a manner as is possible to foreign thought. And, throughout, we find those who would translate urged to keep to the spirit, rather than the word of the original. With all this in mind, it is a shock to turn to the opening poem, which reads like a Scotch ballad! Here is one stanza:

> The mirk did fa' lang syne, lang syne,
> When twa fond systres wi' hands that twine
> Went doun to bathe whaur the waters shine.
> *Blaw wind, bend beugh in the stormy weather,*
> *They that be leel sleep saft taegither.*

Clearly, the author of this anthology has, as he says, attempted to match the French language as closely as possible with that of the same period in English literature. He has followed this plan with all his translations of old French, and it seems to me a grave mistake, even an affectation. For the flavor which should infuse its spirit into the English is altogether missed.

Mr. Thorley has done better with the more modern poems. He says is his introduction:

> The real task of a translator is that of re-creating, and unless he can bring to his original as much as he takes from it, he had far better leave it alone.

But he has sometimes fallen short of his theories, as in his renderings of Gautier. *L'Art,* the oft-attempted, has been translated better by Dobson, or Santayana. Again he says:

> It is so difficult to keep rightly informed and critically aloof amid the trumpeting and disparagement of rival clans, whose activities seem only to bewilder the native doctors, that a mere foreigner may be forgiven for including frankly what happens to appeal to him.

And he has given evidence of his critical aloofness in *The Cloud,* considered one of the most delicate of the *Émaux et Camées.* Of this he has done into English only three of the original nine stanzas; omitting the whole point of the poem, which seems hardly fair to the author.

The renderings of Baudelaire are especially fine. They have the spirit of the French, and yet—truly a rare achievement—they do not read like translations. Mallarmé's *Apparition* keeps the subtle savor of the original. The author has been less happy with the ten versions of Verlaine. Maeterlinck is represented by only one poem, *The Seven Maids of Orlamonde,* a questionable choice but well translated. *Autumn* and *Cleopatra,* by Samain, are beautifully presented. Rodenbach's *In Tiny Townships* is as musical in English as in French. Of the translations of de Régnier, *The Secret* and *Experience* are excellent, while good renderings of Viélé-Griffin, Fort, Bataille, Gregh, Guérin and many other poets give distinction to this anthology.

Agnes Lee Freer

SYMBOLISTS AND DECADENTS

La Mêlée Symboliste, by Ernest Raynaud. La Renaissance du Livre, Paris.

Here is an example of the fine book-making of *La Renaissance du Livre.* Consisting of reminiscences of the author and his poet-companions, it suggests Gautier's *La Fenêtre Ouverte,* and is equally fascinating.

A chapter on *Les Zutistes,* founded by Charles Cros, describes the Café de Versailles, where every evening this leader gathered about him such men as Coppée, Richepin and Raoul Ponchon. Here Louis Marsolleau recited sentimental bagatelles or noble poems, and here Poussin was made to read over and over again his artistic achievement, *La Jument Morte,* which resounded through the breweries of the Latin Quarter for several seasons. But what assured this order, aside from the renown of Charles Cros, a place in history, was that it was the cradle of a lyric evolution, in which, perhaps, the two most prominent figures were Laurent Tailhade and Jean Moréas. From their fruitful controversies arose the new movement. Here is a portrait of Jean Moréas at that time:

> He always went gloved in white, corseted tightly, his glossy hair curled in the latest fashion, wearing a multicolored cravat and a flower in his buttonhole. His timid nature was hidden under brusque mannerisms, and he fortified himself with an insolent monocle. His hatred of mediocrity was expressed in brief aphorisms. And Tailhade draped himself, like a Spaniard, in a black, scarlet-lined cape. Full of anecdote and wit, he offset the disdainful haughtiness of Moréas toward bad poets by firing at them a volley of cleverness. No one knew as he did how to use irony and unctuous epigram.

At this time the two were merely at their début, their period of dilettantism. Later they were to descend from their ivory tower to write for the periodical *Lutèce,* wherein Verlaine had already begun to print his *Poètes Maudits. Lutèce,* once a banal gazette of the Latin Quarter, was becoming the official organ of advancing symbolism. To this paper we are indebted for poems by Paul Adam, Rachilde, Henri de Régnier, Jules Laforgue, Francis Viélé-Griffin, and Ernest Raynaud. According to Raynaud, *Lutèce,* which came to its end in 1886, had the glory of devoting itself entirely to the poets of the new school, who wrote for it their best and worst poems.

To me one of the most interesting things in this little volume is the discovery of the origin of the word *décadent.* Verlaine was sick in bed, his confrères gathered about him. On the bed lay a magazine in coarse gray paper. Someone took it up and read mockingly from the cover, *"Le Décadent!"*—and asked, "What imbecile invented this ridiculous title?" "I am the imbecile," challenged a crisp voice. The author turned and saw Anatole Baju, a little man with flaming eyes set in a wizened face. The history, as given by Raynaud, of this founder of *Le Décadent* is very entertaining. Verlaine, who ardently supported the magazine, defines its purpose thus:

> Décadence is Sardanapalus, in the midst of his women, setting the torch to his funeral pile; it is Seneca reciting poems as he opens his veins; it is Petronius masking his agony with flowers; it is the marchioness walking to the guillotine with a smile, and with care not to disturb her coiffure. Décadence is the art of dying beautifully.

Le Décadent raised a hue and cry from the symbolists; yet their aims against the literature then in vogue were alike. Both wanted to be freed from form which had outlived itself.

A. L. F.

OUR CONTEMPORARIES

TWO NEW MAGAZINES

We welcome two new magazines which are to be devoted wholly or largely to poetry—*The Measure,* published by Frank Shay at 4 Christopher Street, New York; and *The Double-dealer,* from 204 Baronne Street, New Orleans. The former began in March, the latter in January.

The Measure: A Journal of Poetry is thus advertised:

> Edited by Maxwell Anderson, Padraic Colum, Agnes Kendrick Gray, Carolyn Hall, Frank Ernest Hill, David Morton, Louise Townsend Nicholl, George O'Neil, Genevieve Taggard. From these nine an acting editor and an assistant are elected quarterly by the board.

We are much interested in this experiment of a shifting editorial board. As fellow-editors, we wonder how it will be arranged—will each pair of acting editors accept only the exact number of poems to be used in their own three numbers and return all others? or will there be hold-overs from one quarterly editorial pair to the next—hold-overs accepted by the first pair and perhaps despised by the second and third and fourth? At any rate, so populous an editorial board, with a three-months' elective tenure of office, makes for variety, relieving the editors of the danger of satiety and the magazine of a too monotonous consistency.

The first number, while not exciting, is competent and interesting. There is nothing revolutionary, but there are characteristic poems by Padraic Colum, Robert Frost, Conrad Aikin, Alfred Kreymberg, Hazel Hall and others we know, besides two or three less familiar entries. The longest poem, *Ice Age,* by Genevieve Taggard, asserts once more her unusual promise; and Wallace Stevens' *Cortège for Rosenbloom* is a beautiful airy fling of his magician's wand.

Maxwell Anderson, the first editor, seems not over-confident in his initial article: "This is not an age favorable to great poetry," he says; "there are not any great poets writing at this time in English, or none so far uncovered. . . . The very value of art, of life, grows dubious." And he confesses:

> *The Measure,* then, is a hope against hope, a venture in the face of despair, a fiddling while Rome burns. . . . If *The Measure* gets hold of an undoubted masterpiece once in its career, it will be lucky. POETRY, of Chicago, has come out uninterruptedly for ten years without doing it. This is not the fault of the editors of POETRY. If there had been masterpieces to print, they would have printed them.

Not yet ten years—only eight-and-a-half; so there is still hope! But meantime may we remind this despairing young editor that it takes a master to recognize a masterpiece; and a slow procession of masters, in accord across spaces of time, to pronounce the ultimatum?

The Double-dealer is an auspicious attempt to give the South a literary organ. It ought to succeed—we hope and trust it will, for the South has a right to speak with its own voice; and those members of the staff whom we know—for

example, John McClure, the New Orleans poet, and Vincent Starrett, Chicago correspondent—are certainly competent.

The local flavor is not yet very strong in the first three numbers, but no doubt that will come. Meantime we have a gay-spirited monthly which has the air of being happily alive, and some of whose entries—of stories, plays, criticism, verse—are vivid and interesting. *H. M.*

NOTES

Mr. Maxwell Bodenheim, formerly of Chicago but now of New York, is the author of *Minna and Myself* (Pagan Pub. Co.); and of *Advice* (Alfred A. Knopf), which was reviewed last month.

Miss Hazel Hall lives in Portland, Oregon. Her first book of verse will soon be published by the John Lane Co.

Mr. Edward Sapir, of the Canadian Geological Survey in Ottawa, is the author of *Dreams and Gibes* (Poet Lore Co.).

Mr. Arthur Davison Ficke was listed last month.

The other poets in this number are new to our readers:

Aline Kilmer (Mrs. Joyce Kilmer) of Larchmont, N. Y., is the author of *Candles that Burn,* published iu 1919 by the George H. Doran Co.

Madame Muriel Ciolkowska is a poet and journalist resident in Bellevur, France. She has served as Paris correspondent of the London *Egoist* and other critical journals.

Julia Weld Huntington (Mrs. John P.), who has published verse and prose in various magazines, lives near Norwich, Conn. Ruth Mason Rice (Mrs. Willis B.), a resident of New York, has published a novel and written for various papers. Miss Dorothy McVickar is living at present in Poughkeepsie, N. Y.; and Miss Amy Bonner and Elizabeth Hart Pennell (Mrs. Henry B., Jr.) are residents of New York City. Miss Blanche Dismorr is an English poet, resident in or near London. So far as the editor knows, none of these six ladies has published as yet a book of verse.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

A Canopic Jar, by Leonora Speyer. E. P. Dutton & Co.
The Last Knight and Other Poems, by Theodore Maynard. Frederick A. Stokes Co.
Seen and Unseen, by Yone Noguchi. (New Ed.) Orientalia, N. Y.
Julian Hunter: Soldier Poet, and *The Dales of Arcady,* by Dorothy Una Ratcliffe. Erskine Macdonald, Ltd., London.
Poems, by Wilfred Owen. B. W. Huebsch, Inc.
The Wind Over the Water, by Philip Merivale. Four Seas Co.
Indian Summer, by Henry Lane Eno. Duffield & Co.
Passions, by Russell Green. Holden & Hardingham, Ltd., London.
Dawn on the Distant Hills, by Steel Grenfell Florence, Pri. ptd.
To-day and Yesterday—Sonnets and Other Verses, by William Dudley Foulke, LL.D. Oxford Univ. Press, Oxford, Eng.
The Little Wings—Poems and Essays, by Vivienne Dayrell. Basil Blackwell, London.
Roses and Rime, by Glenn D. Whisler. Pri. ptd., Cleveland.
Dreams at Twilight, by Ada Emery McCurdy. Pri. ptd., New Albany, Ind.
Swift Wings: Songs in Sussex, by the editor of Lillygay. The Vine Press, Sussex, England.

ANTHOLOGIES AND TRANSLATIONS:

Oxford Poetry: 1917-1919. Basil Blackwell, Oxford, Eng.
A Miscellany of American Poetry: 1920. Harcourt, Brace & Howe.
Star-points: Songs of Joy, Faith, and Promise from the Present-day Poets, ed. by Mrs. Waldo Richards. Houghton Mifflin Co.
The Garden of Bright Waters: One Hundred and Twenty Asiatic Love Poems, tr'd by E. Powys Mathers. Houghton Mifflin Co.
Selections from the Rubaiyat & Odes of Hafiz, tr'd by a member of the Persia Society of London. J. M. Watkins, London.

PLAYS:

Mary Stuart, by John Drinkwater. Houghton Mifflin Co.
Two Mothers, by John G. Neihardt. Macmillan Co.

PROSE:

The Sacred Wood, by T. S. Eliot. Alfred A. Knopf.
The Tales of Chekhov—Vol. IX, The Schoolmistress and Other Stories, translated by Constance Garnett. Macmillan Co.
Romance of the Rabbit, by Francis Jammes, translated by Gladys Edgerton. Nicholas L. Brown.

Vol. XVIII No. III

Poetry

A Magazine of Verse

Edited by Harriet Monroe

June 1921

Boys and Girls,
by Genevieve Taggard
Hokku on a Modern Theme,
by Amy Lowell
Voluntaries, by Mark Turbyfill
Annotations, by Marx G. Sabel

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Poetry
A Magazine of Verse

VOL. XVIII
NO. III

JUNE 1921

BOYS AND GIRLS

The Sun-children:

Boys and girls, come out to play!
The sun is up, the wind's astray,
Early morning's gold is gone—
(They slumber on, they slumber on!)
I have never done with you
Half the things I want to do.
I will put kisses on your knees,
And we will squander as we please
This little, lazy, lovely day.

Ninety million miles away
The sun halloos: "Come out to play!
The winds are prancing on tip-toe,

Impatient with long waiting so;
The hills look up. Come out! and oh,
Let your bodies dart and run
While I make shadows!" says the sun.

Boys and girls, come out to play
Before the river runs away.
I have never done with you
Half the things I want to do.

The Sun:

Boys and girls, come out to play
Before the river runs away.
While you are fluid, unafraid,
Beneath my light and shadow skim,
Before this folded gloom is dim
And limb no longer follows limb,
Dancing under spotted shade.

For dancing were your bodies made!
Before the roses of you fade
Find your meaning for the mouth
While I lean south; while I go west
Find your meaning for the rest.

The Sun-child:

Throw back your head and fly with me—
Love me, chase me, lie with me!
Follow, sweetheart of the sun,

Turn and follow where I run
Between blue vineyards and fruit-trees—
Fall down and kiss me on the knees!
Pant beside me while I pull
Berries for you from the full
Blue-jewelled branches! Crush them red—
Not on your mouth, on mine instead!

The Sun:

Nimble you move—you are my own,
My pliant essence. All alone
On fire in the passive sky
I burn—a stone, a liquid stone.
Together, you in double shade,
Discover why your limbs were made.

The Sun-child:

I have never done with you
Half the things I want to do!
Link your arms and loosen them,
Pluck and suck a grass's stem,
Touch my breasts with that blue aster;
Kiss me fast—I'll kiss you faster!
Link your arms and loosen them.

Now link your arms like mine together,
Toward me lightly—like a feather
Dance! Like feathers you'll be blown
Across the level field alone.

And like a brown wing my bare feet
Will skim the meadow till we meet.

The river skips, but we are quicker:
Its little body's slender glisten
Goes down alley-ways of leaves.
Flicker, sun, and river, flicker!
Listen, lover, listen, listen
How the river laughs and grieves!

I have never done with you
Half the things I want to do.
Leap for me, sweetheart—reach and try
To catch me, sweetheart! Kiss and cry
After me, sweetheart, darting by!

After you seize me, we will lie,
I in the grass, you in the sky;
After you kiss me, we will start
To try and reach each other's heart;
And, searching frantically, find
The unseen blisses of the blind.

The Sun-children:
Before the river runs away,
Boys and girls, come out to play.
(They slumber on, they slumber on—
Morning's glint is almost gone!)
With yellow bubbles fill your veins

Before the lusty day-star wanes.
(They slumber on, they slumber on—
Silken leopard noon is gone!)
Die you may, die you must—
Fill your mouths with pollen dust;
Calyxes and honey thighs
Both will wither. Beauty dies!
Find out why mouths are berry-red
Before you stiffen in your drab bed.
Over you humming summer will glide,
You'll never lie languid on your side
And listen then as you listen now
To half-heard melodies—oh, how
The river runs and runs and runs,
Fluid with splendor, and the sun's
Circuit is singing. Fragile day!
Boys and girls, come out to play!

Genevieve Taggard

TWENTY-FOUR HOKKU ON A MODERN THEME

I

Again the larkspur,
Heavenly blue in my garden.
They, at least, unchanged.

II

How have I hurt you?
You look at me with pale eyes,
But these are my tears.

III

Morning and evening—
Yet for us once long ago
Was no division.

IV

I hear many words.
Set an hour when I may come
Or remain silent.

V

In the ghostly dawn
I write new words for your ears—
Even now you sleep.

VI

This then is morning.
Have you no comfort for me
Cold-colored flowers?

VII

My eyes are weary
Following you everywhere.
Short, oh short, the days!

VIII

When the flower falls
The leaf is no more cherished.
Every day I fear.

IX

Even when you smile,
Sorrow is behind your eyes.
Pity me, therefore.

X

Laugh—it is nothing.
To others you may seem gay,
I watch with grieved eyes.

XI

Take it, this white rose.
Stems of roses do not bleed;
Your fingers are safe.

XII

As a river-wind
Hurling clouds at a bright moon,
So am I to you.

XIII

Watching the iris,
The faint and fragile petals—
How am I worthy?

XIV

Down a red river
I drift in a broken skiff.
Are you then so brave?

XV

Night lies beside me
Chaste and cold as a sharp sword.
It and I alone.

XVI

Last night it rained.
Now, in the desolate dawn,
Crying of blue jays.

XVII

Foolish so to grieve,
Autumn has its colored leaves—
But before they turn?

XVIII

Afterwards I think:
Poppies bloom when it thunders.
Is this not enough?

XIX

Love is a game—yes?
I think it is a drowning:
Black willows and stars.

XX

When the aster fades
The creeper flaunts in crimson.
Always another!

XXI

Turning from the page,
Blind with a night of labor,
I hear morning crows.

XXII

A cloud of lilies,
Or else you walk before me.
Who could see clearly?

XXIII

Sweet smell of wet flowers
Over an evening garden.
Your portrait, perhaps?

XXIV

Staying in my room,
I thought of the new spring leaves.
That day was happy.

Amy Lowell

TANKA

TO ELIZABETH

Against the door dead leaves are falling;
On your window the cobwebs are black.
Today, I linger alone.

The foot-step?
A passer-by.

SPRING

Down the slope white with flowers,
Toward the hills hazy blue,
A butterfly
Floats away.

MAY MOON

Milky night;
Through the resting trees
A petal—
Falling.

STORM

Against the gulls that play in the gale
The black waves dart
White fangs
In vain.

Jun Fujita

NOVEMBER

On a pale sandhill
A bare tree stands;
The death-wind
Has snatched the last few leaves.

A LEAF

The November sky without a star
Droops low over the midnight street;
On the pale pavement, cautiously
A leaf moves.

DECEMBER MOON

Among the frozen grasses
Frosting in the moon glare,
Tombstones
Are whiter tonight.

ECHO

I know it is not she,
Yet I listen
To distant laughter
Fleeting away.

Jun Fujita

GOODFELLOWSHIP

A Fragment by Li Po

Hast thou not beheld the Yellow River
Which flows from Heaven?
It runs rapidly down and empties into the sea,
Nevermore to return.

Hast thou beheld the mirror in the hall
That reflects the grief of white hair?
In the morning it is like black silk,
In the evening it will be covered with snow.

While we are in the mood of joy,
Let us drink!
Let not the golden bottle be lonely,
Let us waste not the moon!

LONELY

By Wang Wei, Eighth Century, A. D.

When the moon begins to grow
And the autumn dews to fall,
My silken jacket is lightly thin,
But I have not changed:
Wistfully I play my lute
Long and deep into the night,
For my heart is shy
Of the empty chamber.

Translated from the Chinese by Moon Kwan

THE HUNCHBACK

I saw a hunchback climb over a hill,
Carrying slops for the pigs to swill.

The snow was hard, the air was frore,
And he cast a bluish shadow before.

Over the frozen hill he came,
Like one who is neither strong nor lame;

And I saw his face as he passed me by,
And the hateful look of his dead-fish eye:

His face, like the face of a wrinkled child
Who has never laughed or played or smiled.

I watched him till his work was done;
And suddenly God went out of the sun,

Went out of the sun without a sound
But the great pigs trampling the frozen ground.

The hunchback turned and retracked the snows;
But where God's gone, there's no man knows.

John Peale Bishop

THE VILLAGER

YOUR HORSES

Often, in clear winter afternoons or crisp fall mornings,
Walking long stretches of sand where waves charge in proudly,
Or standing on curving walls, looking out over empty water,
I am aware of the memory of you and your horses—
Prancing bays, proud roans, and wild white horses;
Your laughter syncopating the hoof-beats of horses,
Pounding on clay turf-land or drumming on long white roads.

Standing at the forks of the river at Orleans Street,
Watching the ice dip up and down in the oily water—
Big gray and white lake birds circling slowly slantwise over the water,
A tug with smoke-stack down for bridges,
And two engines coughing out of time with each other—
I ride again with the memory of you and your horses,
Of you mounting a flight of steps on a glossy black,
Riding down a railroad track to meet me on a deep-chested bay.

And the sound of your laughter comes to me over the backs of horses,
The memory of your hair streaming with the manes of horses,

Your firm brown hand flung out in the crowding of horses,
Greeting me over the necks of wild white horses, galloping
home.

NEVERTHELESS

Inasmuch as I love you
And shall know no peace more unless I am near you,
Though you are a flame of will
Proud and variable as you are beautiful and dear—
Nevertheless I will go your way,
Since you will not go mine.

Therefore, although the cool roads of my village
Are more pleasant to me than the pavements of your city;
Although its dim streets are more kindly than your glar-
ing arcs;
Though the unhurried voices of my townspeople
Are more friendly music in my ears than the screamings
And glib chatter of your city-dwellers:
Nevertheless I will go down with you into the city
And bruise my heart upon its bricks;
Become brother to its shrieking "elevated"
And learn to hurry away my days in this brief world
Among the grimy roofs that soil the clean young sunshine;
Thinking only at long whiles, in summer dusks,
Of hushed paths where hurrying feet have never trodden,
Of cool lanes white in the splendor of the rising moon.

CONCENTRIC CIRCLES

Cracks in broken windows
Thread out like spokes from the center where a pebble
or a bullet struck,
Cross and recross, and spread to the edge of the pane.
Ripples in still water or running water race out in concentric circles from the place where a stone or a body is thrown in.
Ice forms on pools in long thin slivers that knit slowly and close up the gaps till a hard, brittle floor is formed.
Fissures in stones spread slowly, and widen and deepen with the prying of frost.

Thoughts are like all these things.

PRAYER

O thou elemental
Rain, sun, and body of the quick warm earth:
Hear these words from the cells of thy blood,
Multitudinous, various!

Let the waters at the dim roots of the grass be sweet,
And the milk be abundant in the breasts of time—
Yet a little while, till the pearl-gray banners of smoke
Be dissolved, and the flowing of rivulets be but a distant murmur
In the shout and the far white splendor of thy coming.

Let thy kindness be as a wide white blanket covering all
The brave inglorious futile race of men
Who lift tired eyes ever to sad stars
More desolate
Than the wind-harrowed wastes of ocean,
Whence comes no answer.
And after our futile striving, give us
Peace.

Clifford Franklin Gessler

GOD-LOVER

Who are you?
Why do you hide behind
Your mask—the sun and stars?

The brazen day and
The moon-washed night
Are alms that you give your beggars.

I ask no mendicant's pittance—
I cry for the supreme desolation of your face.

Muriel Safford

VOLUNTARIES

THE INTANGIBLE SYMPHONY

How shall I capture
Sound and desire?

Let candor stir upon candor
As sword upon sword,
Tempering the tenor and the timbre
Of this sweet ecstasy.
Grieved is my mind,
Harassed by music
Untouched of any sound.

Yet on trellis, on infinite arch,
On bridges of fretted iron—
Frail to thought, acrid to sight,
Thunderous with traffic of men—
Red-budding, peach-petalled
Beauty flames into view.

But how shall I capture
Sound and desire?
How shall I hear
The pointed vagaries,
The evanescent harmonies,
That float unfingered
Across the strings of the mind?

How shall I hear,
Plucked from the intangible mind-strings,
The song desire sings, and sings?

There is no create instrument.

THE POWER OF NOTHING

I only laughed,
As at a gauche mistake,
When I learned we had paid
With innocent counterfeit—
That such carnival, confetti,
Festival of flamingo fun,
We had danced for nothing spent:
So much brightness
All out of nothing!

But when I learned of my awkwardness—
Mistaking the denomination, color, design
Of a little word you gave me!—
And of the bright shapes of dreams
Germinated in my heart
All out of nothing,
I could not laugh any more;
For there was a sharp severing of slender unseen roots,
And that fruit which they bore
Fell dangling and bruised
From the tendrils and the vine.

REPLETION

I have fed on the radiance of my beloved
Lying beneath the flowering pear-tree.
Her breasts are inverted cups of sunlight;
She is dappled over with iridescence.
Light and heat
Pierce the pear leaves,
And fall dizzily
Through a flashing of petal-flakes,
Burnishing and mellowing her.
My nostrils are prophetic
With the sweetness of pear flesh,
My eyes are dazzled with love made manifest,
And my mind is parturient and tremulous
With glistening schemes.

THE SEA STORM

I hurtled like a hound for joy
Through the storm
Of your magnificence—
Wave on crashing, dashing, crested wave,
You hurl yourself against space!
You are positive force,
You might crush me to nothingness;
Yet I revel like a golden super-carp

Flashing *pas de poisson*
Through flowers of foam.

And I know your ecstatic response,
Exquisite monster,
As I blossom into glittering spray
Above you!

THINGS NOT SEEN

The sea-gull poises
In the charged, expectant air.

The sea-gull poises
With delicate resistance.

Its sheer conscious being
Is cause to strike creation
Out of all this emptiness.

The sea-gull waits,
Wavering slightly
Against this mighty immanence.

So does my heart wait
For the release of a substance
Not yet seen.

Mark Turbyfill

FROM THE NEAR EAST

CAPE HELLES

This water is all rich; and no great wave,
Rushing, can ever sweep from the old ooze
The witnesses of simple men who gave
Their lives here to the sea.

Our ship's foot goes
Warily now, for here she treads above
The globèd mortal homes of dreams all drowned.
Sometimes, as if a man smiled at his love,
A smile turns in the water. Round and round,
Sometimes, a hundred cries go swimming, while
Such common woes and hopes are ocean-freight,
That every eddy of the grey sea-mile
Is strewn with ardors inarticulate
And homing memories.

Yet this must be:
That men's ghosts ever shame old pagan Earth,
With human blood crimson grey Neptune's sea,
Snap the Fates' thread with high impetuous mirth,
Cast in the dicing game mortality,
Slip from the moorings of sweet flesh, and then
Clean past the loom of the Ultimate Islands ride,
To bring a vision down to the sea again
In ships, and keep the faith, and take the tide.

Morris Gilbert

THE BOULGHAR DAGH

Day by day the sun booms over this long valley,
And the mountains are sun-flowers
And smile fondly at him as he goes by.
For only Gunesh, the sun,
Of all the people they have seen pass,
Is steadfast.

Alexander came through this valley,
And did not return.
At its mouth a lass unparalleled
Found Antony in a market-place,
Whistling to the air: they sailed away together.
A man named Saul trudged up this road soon after:
He went on to Rome.
Godfrey de Bouillon passed this way, to drown
In Cydnus.

Some troopers from Bavaria and Pesth
Were here last year—and they fled.
Now Pathans and Sikhs
And other swarthy fighting-men camp hereabouts.
But presently they'll be gone.

Morris Gilbert

BY HILL AND DALE

PRAYER AT TIMBER-LINE

Oh, that I could fashion words
  As the wind bends the trees—
Could shape my lines as shining-bare,
  As exquisite, as these
White branches of the writhen pine
Standing alone at timber-line!

Winds of life, blow stinging-free
  Into my heart that's waiting, still!
Beat on my words unceasingly,
  And shape them to your stern white will!

BEAUTY

I went where pines grew;
  Beauty I found in these,
In stars, and in the strange
  Twisted boughs of trees.

I went where houses were;
  Beauty I found then
In eyes, and in the strange
  Twisted lives of men.

THE ODD ONES

I like best those crotchety ones
  That follow their own way
In whimsical oblivion
  Of what the neighbors say.

They grow more rare as they grow old,
  Their lives show in their faces—
In little slants and twisted lines;
  Like trees in lonely places.

GRAMPA SCHULER

Grampa Schuler, when he was young,
Had a crest of hair, and shining eyes.
He wore red-flowered waistcoats,
Wild Byronic ties.
The whole land of Germany
Wasn't wide enough!—
He ran away one night, when winter
Seas were fierce and rough.

He has a sleek farm here
With already a settled air.
He's patriarchal, with his sons
And daughters round him everywhere,
His son's son Jim has fiery eyes—
He wants to go where the land is new!
Grampa bitterly wonders: "What are
Young fools coming to!"

PRIMAVERAL

You should have seen the griffin in the pine-tree
With stars for eyes!

You are my own,
Mine, though I never found you.

There was the hollow valley
With its river,
There was the big magnolia
Strung with moons . . .

I look for you . . .
Love makes my feet unsteady.

One day
The perul in the garden was on fire with tanagers . . .
I saw it burning.

I wonder where you were?

Yesterday the flower woman brought me violets . . .
Cape jasmine . . . dark roses . . .

When are you coming?

Today the yucca has finished building her tower of
ivory . . .

It is late . . .
What excuse will you offer?

Grace Hazard Conkling

RECOMPENSE

You are growing old, my lithe and gay,
But age with you is different and rare;
Gray—yes, but like the mist that veils an autumn moon
Stretched across the black trees' gaunt array.
Your light, now opalescent and more gently bright,
Makes beautiful the wintry night.
Why do you long for the bronze hue of youth,
Or the noisiness of its display?
Let us be comforted in this sweet quietness where
There is nothing loved before
But that our having loved so long can make more fair.

THE SWEET LADY

She is so gay—
Such easy sweetness falls away
From her! Her words are simple as a little wind
That sings all day.
Such lazy kindliness she spreads about,
As thoughtless as her hands that twine
And turn their pink palms in and out.
Such loving weariness has she
Of giving sweetness forth unthinkingly,
That she is almost sad—still smiling sad,
Tired with her all-unknowing ministry.

Anne Elizabeth Wilson

ANNOTATIONS

JEREMIAD

What avail are these days?
The days come and the days go,
Limping like old men
Over an uneven pathway.

Day follows day,
And each day
Falls over my last memory of you
Like a thin white sheet
Over a dead body.
Day after day—
Sheet upon sheet—
Until now I cannot see
The lines of the dead body underneath.

What avail are these nights?
The nights come and the nights go,
Shambling like heavy negresses
Walking down a steep path
With overflowing baskets on their heads.

Night follows night,
And each night
Falls over my last memory of you,
Like a heavy black sheet over a dead body.
Night follows night,

Sheet falls upon sheet,
Until now I cannot see
The lines of the dead body underneath.
What avail are these days
And these nights,
These halt men, and these
Cumbersome negresses burdened with baskets?
    Day after day,
    Night after night,
    Sheet upon sheet,
    Black on white,
Falling over a dead body,
Covering a dead body,
Falling upon and covering my memory of you.

NO GOOD THING

It is no good thing
Even on a dark night
To clutch a memory for guidance.
I know, because I have tried it
Confidently.
I walked on in the dark night
Remembering.
I walked on and on,
Yet no star shone,

And there was no light nor even any ghost of light
Ever
To guide me.

I shall walk on in the dark night
Forgetting.
I shall clutch no memory for guidance.
I shall walk on and on,
Accepting the darkness
Proudfully, fearlessly, without hope.
For it is no good thing
Even on a dark night
To clutch a memory for guidance.

THE STRANGE LOAD

Things have come to a fine pass!
Just now,
As I sat teasing shy thoughts,
A strange load lifted
Of its own volition!

Maybe I should make a moan,
Or gurgle in my throat a bit,
On losing suddenly
And for no apparent reason
The strange load—
The little weight of chosen sorrowings,
The small warm woes of love.

Marx G. Sabel

Little lady whom my heart has nurtured,
The pressure of your petulance
Has passed;
Your eyes' chatoyancy
In the deep dark night of my heart's heart
Has faded,
And the phosphorescent glimmers of your body
In the center of my mind
Have faded.

Faded . . . lifted . . . faded . . .
Entirely done away with.

Shall I miss the strange load lifted,
Having carried it so far,
So long, with such great care?

Now I arise from a cramped posture,
Now I slowly swing my shoulders back
And take a deep breath!

Now I shatter heights of thin air,
Stretching forth rejuvenescent fingers!

Yes . . . surely . . .
Things have come to a fine pass,
A fine pass, indeed.

Marx G. Sabel

COMMENT

A WORD ABOUT KEATS

TO remember in December a February centenary—that is plainly an editor's duty. In that plain duty the editors of POETRY plainly failed, else would they have prepared the February number with reference to Keats. No poet on our list having aspired to challenge *Adonais* with an elegy, the editor should have—indeed, would have—paid a brief prose tribute to a spirit whose flaring fame no longer needs one.

As it is, the month has gone by, but not the year—a year also sacred to Dante, who died at Ravenna September fourteenth, 1321, leaving his work achieved and complete after a rounded life of fifty-six rich years. Of all English poets since Shakespeare there may be two, Keats and Synge, who gave promise of genius as powerful and shapely as Dante's, and of mind and will as capable of fulfilling its high serene commands; and these two, by the same tragic hazard, were fatally interrupted by illness and early death.

The *Quarterly's* reception of Keats has become a byword—it is so easy for the casual inheritor of opinions to be wise after the fact. But, after all, the youthful bard was trying out a new instrument; and even Shelley himself was not at once impressed, for he said of *Endymion*, "The author's intention seems to be that no person should possibly get to the end of it;" not to speak of Byron,

whose remarks are almost unprintable. So far as this luscious and exuberant exercise of youthful genius is concerned, I sympathize with Shelley, for I never could read it through without liberal skipping. Ditto *Hyperion*—but then, my appetite for modernized Greek myth is distinctly limited; I cannot "appreciate the intensity and complexity of symbolic and spiritual meaning" which Keats and many other poets have read into, and wrung out of, a folk-lore beautiful in its original primitive simplicity.

Isabella, or the Pot of Basil was a more Chaucerian stunt of verse-narrative—a tale drawn from Boccaccio's rich mediaeval storehouse: a pretty thing, but slight—even the poet soon tired of it, called it "mawkish." *Lamia* also did not quite "come off." And the beauty of *The Eve of Saint Agnes*, exquisite as it is, is of the fragile, the dreamily artificial kind, like a Venetian goblet blown in many-colored glass.

These all were preparatory. What have we to assert triumphantly the immortality of Keats the master? We have a half-dozen lyrics of beauty incredible and supreme, beauty which admits this youth to the innermost magic circle of all the rich domain of English poetry, the circle haunted by Shakespeare's voice, by a few strains from Marlowe and Spenser, from Coleridge and Shelley and Blake; while beyond, near but not quite within, one may hear the chanting of Milton and of old John Donne, and perfect chords from Burns, Byron and Poe, leading

on many others, a number of moderns among them—poets ever to be remembered, who have sung a few songs, or maybe only one, too beautiful to perish.

The *Ode to a Nightingale*, and the ballad *La Belle Dame sans Merci*—any long life were richly charged with these two poems alone. And when we add to these the other great odes—the *Grecian Urn*, *Autumn*, *Melancholy*, *Bards of Passion and of Mirth;* and certain sonnets—*On Chapman's Homer*, *When I Have Fears*, and the last one of all, *Bright Star*—one must say "Wonderful—wonderful!" and feel that what Death robbed us of might have added to the mass, but hardly to the splendor, of this poet's gift.

But what a man gives, be he poet, beggar or king, is always himself; and the fascinating thing about Keats' imperishable gift is the torch-like beauty of that glorious spirit which went flaming through the cluttered world for a few brief years, leaving a cleared path for men's souls to walk in. He saw straight and true in a perplexed and distracted age—

> Beauty is truth, truth beauty—that is all
> Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

To him Byron's rebellions, Shelley's reforms, were negligible details in the rounded spiritual experience of man. To him, as to Blake, "nothing is pleasing to God except the glad invention of beautiful and exalted things." He knew that beauty includes all perfections sublunary and subliminal; that it is the magic circle which encloses them all, giving form and symmetry to the created uni-

verse—and to that infinitesimal detail of it, the life and dreams of man.

And then the tragic poignancy of his suffering—for unfulfilled love and early death caught his spirit unready and unreconciled; and the great things he had done seemed slight to his despair in contrast with those "high-piled books" unwritten in his "teeming brain." Of course we know now that his disease was a direct infection from the young brother whom he had nursed tenderly to the end; and that the medical malpractice of his time speeded him off as fast as possible by prescribing a starvation diet. It is small consolation to feel that today a science more enlightened might have saved him to round out Dante's fifty-six years and rival the majestic mass of the great Italian's completed labors. Fortunately there is a higher consolation: a few perfect poems, which, being perfect, are therefore in themselves complete, sufficient.

H. M.

THE SUB-CONSCIOUS CLICHÉ

To what extent does language, created and constantly influenced by a nation's thinking, react upon the thinking which creates it?

Rabindranath Tagore brought this old question of the philologists to my mind afresh when he said recently in Chicago, speaking of transferring his poems from Bengali to English, "It was not like translating, it was recreating in another medium."

I take this to mean that the English words themselves influenced the thought back of the poems, since this thought must have been the same in both cases. So it has occurred to me that the influence of words in our mother tongue is probably so ingrained in us that we are unable to perceive it, but that in a foreign tongue we might be able to catch a glimpse of its action. And I have been amusing myself by comparing the stock poetical clichés of several languages. I do not mean the stock similes, for the influence would be too hard to trace here; but the rhyme clichés, in which it is more apparent. I know only two other languages, French and German, well enough to do anything with this, but I wish some more scholarly poet would consider it.

A tendency is so much easier to recognize in its exaggerated forms, when it reduces itself *ad absurdum*, that I shall offer as examples the worst possible clichés.

They pertain, it seems, in all languages to the tender sentiments. The word *heart* for example. In English the standard rhymes to it are *part* and *dart*. *Part* follows naturally enough perhaps. But why should we, out of the innumerable images pertaining to love, have fastened with such tenacity to that of Cupid's dart and the concrete image of a pierced heart, except that it rhymes? I can find no such persistent reference, indeed very little reference at all, in either French or German doggerel to this particular image. Has not the accidental physical sound of the words foisted it on us? In German the

standard rhymes to *Herz* are *Schmerz* (*pain*) and *Scherz* (*a gay whimsy or joke*). In French *coeur* is a syllable more easily rhymed, so the clichés are less marked, but *pleure* seems to be the most common with *meure* a close second. In all of these it appears that the melancholy side of love is uppermost in the mind of the budding poet of whatever nation. But the precise form this melancholy takes would seem to depend on the rhymes he finds to hand.

In this connection French offers an excellent example. The word *tendresse*, of which the French are very fond, has a cliché *ivresse* (literally *drunkenness* but figuratively *rapture*), which follows it everywhere. This image of being drunk on love is so seldom found in either English or German that one cannot help thinking it is suggested by the rhyme.

Sometimes of course the natural sequence of ideas happens to rhyme and so the words become wedded, as *kiss* and *bliss*, or *eyes* and *skies;* which last—curiously enough, since the words are both of northern origin—rhyme also in French, *yeux* and *cieux*. But how about our English rhymes for *love—above* and *dove?* Is either of these ideas inherent in the idea of love? *L'amour* on the other hand seems to suggest to the sentimental Frenchman *toujours*, though this follows more naturally and is not a perfect rhyme. In German *Liebe* is difficult to handle, and is most often either lopped off or imperfectly rhymed with *trübe* (*forlorn*).

Of the clichés on other subjects *life* in English is accom-

panied by *strife*, naturally enough perhaps, but more persistently than elsewhere. And to the French *patrie* seems to carry with it most frequently *tyrannie*. *Country* in English doesn't rhyme easily, but we are apt to distort it to rhyme with *free*. Germany, which is fond of its *Lieder*, brings in constant reference to *Flieder* (*lilacs*), for no very visible reason except the rhyme. There are others of course, but these are enough to point the question.

Perhaps the poetaster who is responsible for these clichés does not set down in them what he wants to say, but what he can say; and certainly the better poet, being more accustomed to riding the only half tractable steed of language, hesitates to use them. But is it not possible that the association of ideas started by the rhyme has driven, with these better poets, down into the subconscious, whence it emerges in other forms than those required by the rhyme? Have we not even in better English lyrics more reference to the dove—though it be carefully unrhymed—and more wounded hearts, than we should otherwise have? Do not the French think more often of rapture and the Germans of lilacs because of this?

Short of some instrument of precision, on the order of that which my doctor friend invented in a dream one night after a bout with several poets, an instrument which measured with scientific exactitude the value of a poem, and gave it a number like the Bertillon system—there will probably be no definite answer to this question. But the idea has amused me. *E. T.*

REVIEWS

FROM NEW MEXICO

Red Earth: Poems of New Mexico, by Alice Corbin. Ralph Fletcher Seymour, Chicago.

If a book is born out of high deliberation, then the shrewdest comment on it shall come out of high deliberation.

There are books all aloof from life's tumult, like out-of-the-way corner haunts where the flair of life equals the most vivid of flowers; and the mob, the stenches, the clumping feet and the poking sightseers are not of it.

Such a book is Alice Corbin's *Red Earth*—clean and aloof as the high deliberate table-lands where it was written; elusive as the grave, questioning faces of the dying nations of copper-skinned people whose last homes are there.

Here is a poem, *Trees and Horses*. It reads:

> Trees stand motionless among themselves;
> Some are solitary.
> Horses wander over wide pastures;
> At night they herd closely,
> Rumps hunched to the wind.

The verbal weaving here is simple and direct as the stripes in an Indian blanket. Of course, there are touch-and-go readers who would get this as only an over-stressed statement of livery-stable fact. Still others of us get an impressionist painting of few lines.

Those who read a poem, hear a song, look at a picture, must have seen some semblance of the thing the artist is trying to tell, sing or paint; else it is no use at all to read, hear or look at what that artist attempts to deliver. Take *Afternoon* as Alice Corbin saw it once on the high deliberate plateau of New Mexico:

Earth tips to the west
And the hills lean backward—
Cedar-trees
Hugging the hillsides.

Smoke drifts in the valley—
The pinto sun
Nickers over the gate
Of the home corral.

Here is a woman who has read nearly all books of importance, and in the centres of so-called culture absorbed wide ranges of intellectual fact. And in the piece titled *Sunlight*, written amid the aloof heights of New Mexico, she voices the heart of a myriad of sunburnt farmers and farmers' wives who joined the ashes of their ancestors with peace and few regrets. *Sunlight* reads:

The sunlight is enough,
And the earth sucking life from the sun.
Horses in a wide field are a part of it,
Dappled and white and brown;
Trees are another kind of life,
Linked to us but not understood.
(Whoever can understand a horse or a tree
Can understand a star or a planet.
But one may feel things without understanding,
Or one may understand them through feeling.)

The simple light of the sun is enough.
One will never remember
A greater thing when one dies
Than sunlight falling aslant long rows of corn,
Or rainy days heavy with grey sullen skies.
Not love, not the intense moment of passion,
Not birth, is as poignant
As the sudden flash that passes,
Like light reflected in a mirror,
From nature to us.

The last five lines are five too many. The fault is "the crime of adjectives," and negations that blur too dark a gray over the already decently crossed slants of afternoon light.

Joseph Warren Beach once wrote of a poet, "He has been known to cry, but never to weep." That would apply to *Red Earth*, the book.

Attractions of a house swept and garnished, ready for a hurdy-gurdy or the undertaker; an open door for tambourines and bells, or crape and a coffin—there is a hospitality that widely varied in *Red Earth.*

Here is an Indian song—only four lines—to be read a hundred times, and then again. It is called *The Wind* and goes:

The wind is carrying me round the sky;
The wind is carrying me round the sky.
My body is here in the valley—
The wind is carrying me round the sky.

Carl Sandburg

MR. AIKEN'S BOW TO PUNCH

Punch, The Immortal Liar, by Conrad Aiken. Alfred A. Knopf.

Four years ago I reviewed for POETRY a book by Conrad Aiken—*Turns and Movies*, it was called. Looking back at that review I see that I accused him of being derivative, always haunted by the ghosts of the other story-tellers in verse. And I added:

> This is the more unfortunate because Mr. Aiken has invention, vividness, compression and at times a pleasing lyric quality. His situations are real situations, swiftly told, his technique easy and effective. It is hard to say just where the authenticity seeps out, yet the total effect is that of a clever craftsman, working well in the medium of his day, yet never quite reaching to the heights.

Today that accusation no longer stands, the authenticity no longer seeps out. Conrad Aiken has found himself.

Punch, The Immortal Liar is a real achievement. All the good qualities of his earlier work are here—the invention and swiftness and surety of his narrative sense, the vividness of phrase and of situation; and they are no longer troubled by ghosts. Even the witty acerbity which in Mr. Aiken's prose criticism, in *Scepticisms* and elsewhere, makes one instinctively doubt his judgments, feeling that some personal complex must underlie so inclusive a displeasure—even this acerbity is of value in *Punch*, since one cannot doubt Mr. Aiken's judgment of a character of his own invention.

Developing the technique he used so effectively in

Roll and swash—
Gee!
I just like to bet
You could wash your soul clean
In moonlight!

Sometimes the monologues—of a bar-keep, perhaps, or a drug-store man—seem harsh in their bald realism; but in each case the poet gives us a hint of the man's dream, shows us the special queer glint that lights his life. It is vital stuff, this book—a good rich promise.

The *pièce de résistance* in Mr. Jones' volume is a love-story in a thousand lines of rhymed verse—a quiet tale, simply told, of a youth and maid meeting here and there in Europe, and falling joyously in love. The description of the girl will suggest the style:

A beauty? Never. Something far more rare:
A spirit bright and flame-like, straight and clear,
That shone from laughing eyes and filled the air
Around her; knowing neither doubt nor fear;
A little out of breath, with glowing cheeks,
As if the sun and tingling frost were brought
Into the room with her; and when she speaks,
Her quaint and happy phrases come unsought.

The story moves along with a certain soft music, in a style more mature than that of the sonnets. There is a faint, delicate perfume in it, as of a genuine and sensitive youthfulness. Mr. Jones will have to guard against temptations toward literary sophistication which beset an American aspirant in London. Probably he would be in less danger at home—perhaps he needs crude contacts.

It will be interesting to watch these two young Chicago poets, travelling such different roads from the same starting-point. *H. M.*

STILL A SOUL TO SAVE

Before Dawn, by Irene Rutherford McLeod. B. W. Huebsch.

On the jacket of *Before Dawn* appears the same portrait of Miss McLeod which adorned the extremely promising *Songs to Save a Soul*, published several years ago. The fact is significant. Miss McLeod has not developed. She is still trying to save her soul, but she has grown a trifle weary in the process.

Most of the poems express a woman's reaction to the war. One does not doubt the author's sincerity; but fresh, deep-rooted poignancy is lacking. And there is a lack of reticence, of restraint—qualities hardly to be expected in a poet who writes of a lover and his beloved as "twin ships of joy upon a summer sea."

Included in the book is a sequence of sixteen inconsequential sonnets. There are good lines, but enough atrocious ones to appal, or amuse, the reader; for example:

> How sexual education still is rotten.
>
> Monogamy in males is nature's freak.
>
> This scorpion janitress, whose watchful part
> Is to destroy who comes his heart to maim.

Probably the best lines are at the end of one of the longer poems, untitled like most of them.

Patient Mother, I have come,
With some withered flowers, home:
Some were flowers, some were weeds—
Life has given to both their seeds.
Lying in thy heart, I pray
Winds may bear the weeds away
Where their roots shall sprawl in vain.
But O my flowers, spring again!

For that matter, Miss McLeod is at her best in her longer poems. *Maggie Winwood*, a narrative of some seven hundred rhymed octosyllabic lines, has elements of strength, effectiveness in character portrayal, and restraint. Objectiveness is the saving grace of this poem, as a somewhat futile subjectiveness explains the weakness of other poems in the volume. *Nelson Antrim Crawford*

COLERIDGE AND WORDSWORTH

Coleridge's Biographia Literaria, with Wordsworth's Preface and Essays on Poetry. University Press, Cambridge, England.

This caption summarizes the elaborate title of a work dealing with the earliest of the reform movements in modern English verse—a work edited by George Sampson and introduced, lengthily, by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch. The volume offers such portions of Coleridge's book as can be combined to form a shapely little treatise for the use of "all who enjoy a poet's interpretation of poetry unclouded by the obscurity of yesterday's philosophy," and also those Wordsworthian essays "out of which the book arose and without which it might never have been written." Quiller-

Couch's introduction offers a judicious union of the biographical, the historical and the critical. *H. B. F.*

CORRESPONDENCE

A LETTER FROM PARIS

My dear POETRY: I was waiting for a masterpiece to unveil to you; but the offerings, if many, have not been masterly. Yet our muse has given a few golden songs. I wish I might enclose in my letter something of their amiable beauty, transmuted into the metal of your speech.

Pierre Camo has published his *Book of Regrets* done in the mellifluous and azure tones of Ronsard and Chenier. Camo is a troubadour from the Pyrenees who has pitched his tent in Madagascar, his aloofness from Paris being the condition of his originality. His classical prosody gives him a place apart from the crowd of modernists. The sonnet, the stanza, are the genuine mold of his sensitiveness; such molds might be crushed to dust in the topsy-turvy productiveness of Paris.

New books from Paul Valery, Georges Duhamel and Mallarmé have a somewhat different sound.

Valery's works are few, and most of them can be found only in reviews and anthologies. *Les Odes* has just come out, and *La Nouvelle Revue Francaise* has given us *Sea Cemetery*. These works show an evolution in Valery. In his odes he turns back to the traditional forms of Racine,

Vigny, Hugo; yet he is a creator because of his breadth of vision and ecstasy. *Sea Cemetery* is a meditation; the poet stands before the graves where his dear ones sleep to the sea's perpetual chanting. He sees their souls reborn in flowers. A wide serenity carries him above the petty emotions of life:

> Fair sky, true sky, look down on me who change;
> After so much pride, after so much strange
> Idleness, but pregnant with power,
> I give myself up to this resplendent space;
> On the roofs of the dead my shadow moves,
> Subduing me to its fleeting frailty.

Briny and cool water work an emotional change in the poet:

> The wind rises! I must try to live!
> The immense air opens and closes my book;
> In foam-dust the daring wave flashes from the rocks.
> Away, dazzled pages!

Valery's verse unites the intellectual and verbal magics which Mallarmé blended so beautifully.

George Duhamel's art is purely emotional. His war meditations, published as *La Vie des Martyres*, have won world-wide fame—I am sure you have read some of them together with Barbusse's. His *Elegies* are still permeated with the horror of those unforgotten scenes: the *Ballad of the Man with the Wounded Throat*, *The Sadness of Sergeant Gautier*, the already famous *Ballad of Florentin Prunier*. In the pages of the new book we hear the sighs of sleepless nights, the rattle of dying throats, the farewells of fellow-

creatures. But through the suffering we feel the approach of hope, for the beauty of things earthly comes with biting acidity to the poet's heart. Blossoming apple-trees, glittering sea, a familiar street, restore hope to his mind. The *Elegies* hesitate between despair and bliss—a smile exquisitely veiled with tears:

> I knew you, happiness!
> Despair, I know you.
> In turns have you not tortured
> My slavish heart!

Of his *Ballad of Florentin Prunier* I shall quote a few lines. The hero's mother has come from the farthest frontier of the provinces:

> She carries a basket with twelve apples,
> And fresh butter in a small pot.
>
> All day long she stays in her chair,
> Near the bed where Florentin is dying.
>
> She stares obstinately
> At the wan face damp with sweat.
>
> She stares and never complains—
> It is her way, being a mother.
>
> For twenty long days he held death at bay,
> While his mother was near him.
>
> At last one morning, as she was weary
> With twenty nights spent God knows where,
>
> She let her head hang a little,
> And slept for a little while.
>
> And Florentin Prunier died quickly
> And quietly, not to waken her.

The daughter of Stéphane Mallarmé has carefully gath-

ered a few hitherto unpublished lines of the famous writer of *The Afternoon of a Faun*. An amiable distraction of a great poet—that's what they seem to be. Some of them are a series of addresses written in quatrains. Some are inscriptions for red Easter eggs, for New Year's gifts, for fans. A certain number of these quatrains are delightful trifles; a few relate the funny little facts of life. Particularly charming is Mallarmé's fancy when he writes to the ladies. Everywhere we recognize the delicate mirage which his more familiar works have taught us to admire.

I am glad I can associate such a stern production as Duhamel's with Mallarmé's precious grace. Seriousness and fancy have always attended our muse; a new blending of them seems to be in the making.

If the influences of Moréas and Rimbaud are still discernible in the verse of today, yet a great deal of purely fanciful verse has been issued lately, verse which reflects the ironical smile of Laforgue and Apollinaire. The changes which the war has brought into our social life as well as our verse are suggested not only in serious poems, but in occasional outbursts of gayety and fancy. France may be a sober—shall I risk saying puritanical?—country (you should see her provincial towns and study her Parisian middle-class!); but in spite of difficult circumstances, in spite of an official gravity and its communicative gloom, modern verse reflects the most diverse moods.

Fancy has now left Montmartre—Max Jacob is never at home!—to dwell with Jean Cocteau near the Champs

Elysées. Having danced Auric's one-step on the terrace of a fashionable sky-scraper, they both went back to the little band of their youth, led by Poulenc at a street corner. There they mixed up with soldiers, nurses, children and sentimental workmen.

Back home the couple entertain their six musician friends and a few poets. The apartment is simple, of a refined poverty, such as Okakura would have liked. The chief ornament is a rose in a glass of water, the very immortal French rose that Raymond Radiguet boasts of having thrown like a bomb in the *Galerie des Machines*, full of modern and exotic monsters. The poetry of this group aims to be as perfect, as useless and as indispensable as red on beautiful cheeks, as a rare wine or a silent promenade; and some of Cocteau's and Radiguet's verse is not far from such perfection. *Jean Catel*

THE WINTER'S PUBLISHING IN ENGLAND

Dear POETRY: The quite unnatural interest in poetry, which the British public was stirred to by the emotional activity of the War, has given way now, broken down before another bad attack of the usual British lethargy in matters artistic. Two books which a year or so ago would have won for their authors a wide as well as a narrow circle of readers—Edmund Blunden's *Waggoner* (Sidgwick & Jackson, and Alfred A. Knopf) and Wilfred Owen's *Poems* (Chatto & Windus), books which have been greeted enthu-

siastically by nearly all reviewers—have achieved a reputation in the narrower sense, it is true; but have not reached the sales of far inferior stuff which appeared during those tragic years. Edmund Blunden was recognized at once as a distinguished poet of English country life; and Wilfred Owen, whose posthumous war-poems have now appeared, is generally considered an abler war-poet than Nichols, Graves, or even Sassoon himself. He has an absolute clarity and intense vividness of vision and an unflinching sympathy, which are hardly equalled anywhere in the poetry of the War.

The *Collected Poems* of Edward Thomas (Selwyn & Blount, and Henry Holt & Co.) have now appeared, with an introduction by Walter de la Mare. A collected edition of Mr. de la Mare's own poems has also appeared; (Martin Secher, and Henry Holt & Co.)— but this does not, unhappily, include the poems published in illustration of Pamela Bianco's drawings in *Flora* (Wm. Heinemann); in many respects his best work, as well as his latest.

W. H. Davies has published another volume, the *Song of Life* (Fifield), which is in fair accord with his earlier work. One of the most interesting books produced during the winter is Robert Graves' *Pier-glass* (Martin Secher), a work which shows that he is developing in a new and quite unexpected direction. It is not a kind of poetry that is likely to be popular; but such poems as *The Gnat*, *The Pier-glass* and *The Jubilee Murder Cycle*, are an interesting variation from the usual modern trend.

John Masefield's racing poem, *Right-Royal*, is too widely known to need comment.

The first number of a new annual anthology has appeared, Mr. Masefield contributing the introduction. William Heinemann is the publisher, and it is to present successive collections of *Public School Verse*, thus in a way anticipating the poetry of the next generation. The first number has discovered, in P. C. Quennell, of Berkhansted School, at least one poet of surprising promise and no inconsiderable attainment. It is to be hoped that those responsible will insure that his talent is not forced. A second volume is in the press. *R. Hughes*

OUR CONTEMPORARIES

KREYMBORG'S MILLIONS

The Dial for May opens its page of *Comment* by quoting this remark of W. C. Blum:

> Williams' first suggestion was that someone give Alfred Kreymborg one hundred thousand dollars.

And the editor goes on to inform us of a windfall of money:

> What do you know? Somebody's gone and done it! Alfred Kreymborg and Harold Loeb announce an *International Magazine of the Arts*, to be printed in Italy and sold all round the block. How much is $100,000 in lire, just now?

"Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Alfred Kreymborg.

Some people are born lucky! Nobody ever offered POETRY an hundred thousand, whether in pounds, dollars, or lire! And POETRY has been a conspicuous target for such windfalls these ten years—nearly—whereas Mr. Kreymborg carried *Others* scarcely more than a year.

The new international is to be called *The Broom*. May it sweep clean without raising too much dust.

NOTES

Genevieve Taggard, who first appeared in POETRY in June of last year, removed soon after from Berkeley to New York, and last winter became one of the nine editors of *The Measure*, the new poetry magazine which we greeted last month. In March, Miss Taggard married Mr. Robert L. Wolf, and the bridal pair are living at present near Farmington, Conn.

Miss Amy Lowell, of Brookline, Mass., requires no introduction. Her latest book of verse, *Legends*, just published by the Macmillan Co., is advertised in this issue.

Mrs. Grace Hazard Conkling, who is in the Smith College faculty, lives in Northampton, Mass. Her latest book of verse, published last year by Henry Holt & Co., is *Wilderness Songs*.

Mr. Morris Gilbert, of Yonkers, N. Y., who served in the navy during the war, and afterwards in the Near-East Relief, is the author of *A Book of Verse*, privately printed in 1917.

Mr. Mark Turbyfill, of Chicago, who received in 1919 POETRY's prize for a young poet, will soon issue, through Monroe Wheeler, of Evanston, Ill., his first book of verse, *The Living Frieze*.

Mr. Marx G. Sabel, of Jacksonville, Florida, has appeared in various magazines.

Mr. Jun Fujita is a Japanese poet resident in Chicago, and now in the employ of *The Evening Post*.

The other poets in this number are new to our readers:

Miss Ruth Suckow, who is a bee-culturist in Earlville, Iowa, has appeared in various magazines.

Mr. Clifford F. Gessler, who has published in the special magazines, recently left Chicago to follow his profession of journalism in Honolulu.

Miss Anne Elizabeth Wilson, now of Brooklyn, but a native of Kentucky, has published little as yet. Ditto, Miss Muriel Safford, of New York City.

Moon Kwan is a Chinese poet who studied recently in the University of California, but is now, the editor is informed, in Europe.

Mr. John Peale Bishop, a native of West Virginia and a resident of New York, has become, since he got out of khaki, managing editor of our brilliant contemporary, *Vanity Fair.*

. . . . . .

The editor regrets to announce that Mr. Richard Aldington has been compelled to resign as London correspondent of POETRY, because of numerous and pressing literary engagements in England. Mr. Aldington's first appearance as a poet was with *Choricos* and two other poems in POETRY's second number, November, 1912, when he was a boy of twenty. Since then many of his best poems, and of late a number of editorials and reviews, have been presented in our pages; and we shall hope for further contributions.

Since his three years' service as an infantryman on the Western Front, Mr. Aldington has gradually become engrossed in critical and editorial labors. We shall hope that they will not absorb him to the neglect of poetry.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

Avon's Harvest, by Edwin Arlington Robinson. Macmillan Co.
Ships in Harbour, by David Morton. G. P. Putnam's Sons.
As the Larks Rise, by Theodosia Garrison. G. P. Putnam's Sons.
Poems, by Augusta E. Stetson, C. S. D. G. P. Putnam's Sons.
Resurrecting Life, by Michael Strange. Alfred A. Knopf.
The Harvest Home, by James B. Kenyon. James T. White & Co.
Some Songs of Bilitis, by S. Fowler Wright. Birmingham, England.
Poems, by Arthur L. Phelps, English Club of Cornell College, Mount Vernon, Iowa.
Poems, by Stewart Mitchell. Duffield & Co.
Highland Light and Other Poems, by Henry Adams Bellows. Macmillan Co.

Vol. XVIII No. IV

Poetry

A Magazine of Verse

Edited by Harriet Monroe

July 1921

CLERK
JUN 23 1921
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by Marjorie Seiffert

Golden Darkness
by Oscar Williams

Elizabeth Roberts,
Babette Deutsch

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Poetry
A Magazine of Verse

VOL. XVIII
NO. IV

JULY 1921

GALLERY OF PAINTINGS

THE SHOP

THE shop is red and crimson. Under the forge
Men hold red bars of iron with black iron tongs.
It crashes—sparks spatter out; it crashes again, again.
At last the iron is bent as it belongs.

Swedes, Norwegians, Poles or Greeks—they are men:
They grin when they please, look ugly when they please;
They wear black oakum in their ears for the noise;
They know their job, handle their tools with ease.

Their eyes are clean and white in their black faces;
If they like, they are surly, can speak an ugly no;
They laugh great blocks of mirth, their jokes are simple;
They know where they stand, which way they go.

If I wore overalls, lost my disguise
  Of womanhood and youth, they would call me friend;
They would see I am one of them, and we could talk
  And laugh together, and smoke at the day's end.

DINGY STREET

It is twilight by the dreary edge of town,
And the December air
Is harsh and bitter. All the trees are bare,
The leaves are scattered and trodden down
To pulp; and every house is brown.
There is no trace of beauty anywhere.

Night comes slowly, the houses hide in the gloom;
But toward the muddy street
One by one their shabby windows bloom
Like golden flowers, to shine and greet
The bundled effigies on sodden feet
Trudging toward welcome in the hidden room.

There is a magic in it. There once more,
Body and spirit, they are warmed and fed.
There, as a thousand times before,
The ancient feast is spread—
The simple miracles of love and bread.
They stumble into beauty at the door.

Marjorie Allen Seiffert

INTERIOR

Words curl like fragrant smoke-wreaths in the room
From the majestic beard of an old man
Who props his shabby feet upon the stove
Recalling ancient sorrows. In the gloom
Beyond the lamp a woman thinks of love,
Her round arms wrapped in her apron, her dark head
Drooping. She has a bitter thing to learn.
His words drift over her . . . uncomforted
Her pain whirls up and twists like a scarlet thread
Among his words. He rises, shoves his chair
Back from the stove, pauses beside her there;
Shuffles irresolutely off to bed.

CUBIST PORTRAIT

She is purposeless as a cyclone; she must move
Either by chance or in a predestined groove,
Following a whim not her own, unable to shape
Her course. From chance or God even she cannot escape!

Think of a cyclone sitting far-off with its head in its hands,
Motionless, drearily longing for distant lands
Where every lonely hurricane may at last discover
Its own transcendent, implacable, indestructible lover!

What is a cyclone? Only thin air moving fast
From here to yonder, to become silent emptiness at last.

TWO WOMEN

Two faint shadows of women were ascending
  The pathway of a desolate hill,
Pale as moth-wings beneath the low-bending
  Sycamore branches, in the moonlight paler still.

"This one is dead," said the moon; "her face is ashen,
  She is dry as a withered leaf—
What has she known of beauty or of passion
  To come by moonlight to the mountain of grief?"

"The other too is dead," said the earth, "yet her feet are
    burning—
  I feel them hot and restless as blown fire.
She has known many paths, why is she turning
  Here, from the secret valley of desire?"

They passed, the moon paled, and from leafy places
  Morning crept forth. At last they came
From the mountain of grief—women with tear-wet faces
  Who had been withered leaf and shadow of flame.

PORTRAIT OF A LADY

Good morning, madam, in your sleepy brown hair—
Twist yourself awake, blink and stare!
I am lying on the floor,
With the old rose-red

Dressing-gown you wore
When you went to bed.

Don't look stupid with your drowsy blue eyes—
Here by the bed is your disguise!
You're a gentle wife
And a tender mother,
And all your life
You shall be no other.

Life is a shawl to wrap about your shoulder—
Every day warmer, every day older.
In half an hour
You'll be dressed,
Youth like a flower
Wilting on your breast.

DREAM-KISS

Moment of delight—most delicate,
Cool as a rose is cool;
Swift and silent as a pool
To mirror wings in flight;
Passionate as frost is passionate
With patterns intricate and white;
Pure as music in the night,
Far off, yet intimate—
It came

Poignant as beauty on swift feet of flame.
It paused . . . was gone . . . most delicate
Moment of delight.

SHADOW

Like the flickering shadow
Of birds flying
Over a wide meadow,
Something passes;
Some forgotten or untold
Dream flies over,
Its wings brushing
Lightly against me, as rushing
Fingers of wind touch clover
And bending grasses.
I am cold
With the shadow of something dying.

AS YOU ARE NOW

Under golden boughs that lean and drift
You lift your head, and ripples of light
Touch the leaves till they quiver,
Reaching down in a motionless
Unachieved caress.
The branches ache with their desire,
And the wind holds its breath.
The moment dies in a shiver

Of icy fire—eternity and death.
Then leaves fall softly on your head.

NOCTURNE

The moonlit hill
And the black trees
Where a hidden bird
Sings and is still—
Even these
Leave me unstirred.

I am hidden deep,
Like the secret bough
Of a tree in leaf.
I am safe asleep—
What can touch me now
Of joy or grief?

For night and noon
The sky is shut,
The winds are dumb;
Behind the moon
No gates are cut
For the winds to come.

Could wind from the moon
Sweep down until,
Like a winter tree,

My leaves were strewn
On the moonlit hill
And I stood free,

Beauty and pain
Would touch me now
With bitter cold,
As moonbeams rain
Through a naked bough
When the year is old.

Marjorie Allen Seiffert

UNDER THE TREE

THE CORNFIELD

I went across the pasture lot
  When not a one was watching me.
Away beyond the cattle barns
  I climbed a little crooked tree.

And I could look down on the field
  And see the corn, and how it grows
Across the world, and up and down,
  In very straight and even rows.

And far away and far away—
  I wonder if the farmer man
Knows all about the corn, and how
  It comes together like a fan.

THE PILASTER

The church has pieces jutting out
  Where corners of the walls begin.
I have one for my little house,
  And I can feel myself go in.

I feel myself go in the bricks,
  And I can see myself in there.
I'm always waiting all alone,
  I'm sitting on a little chair.

And I am sitting very still,
  And I am waiting on and on
For something that is never there,
  For something that is gone.

THE STAR

O little one, away so far,
You cannot hear me when I sing.

You cannot tell me what you are,
I cannot tell you anything.

WATER NOISES

When I am playing by myself,
  And all the boys are lost around,
Then I can hear the water go—
  It makes a little talking sound.

Along the rocks below the tree,
  I see it ripple up and wink;
And I can hear it saying on,
  "And do you think? and do you think?"

A bug shoots by that snaps and ticks,
  And a bird flies up beside the tree
To go into the sky to sing.
  I hear it say, "Killdee, killdee!"

Or else a yellow cow comes down
  To splash a while and have a drink.
But when she goes I still can hear
  The water say, "And do you think?"

CRESCENT MOON

And Dick said, "Look what I have found!"
And when we saw we danced around,
And made our feet just tip the ground.

We skipped our toes and sang, "Oh-lo!
Oh-who, oh-who, oh what do you know!
Oh-who, oh-hi, oh-loo, kee-lo!"

We clapped our hands and sang, "Oh-ee!"
It made us jump and laugh to see
The little new moon above the tree.

STRANGE TREE

Away beyond the Jarboe house
  I saw a different kind of tree.
Its trunk was old and large and bent,
  And I could feel it look at me.

The road was going on and on
  Beyond, to reach some other place.
I saw a tree that looked at me,
  And yet it did not have a face.

It looked at me with all its limbs;
  It looked at me with all its bark.
The yellow wrinkles on its sides
  Were bent and dark.

And then I ran to get away,
  But when I stopped and turned to see,
The tree was bending to the side
  And leaning out to look at me.

A CHILD ASLEEP

And I looked for him everywhere
  Because I wanted him to play;
And then I found him on his bed
  Asleep, but it was day.

His eyes were shut behind the lids—
  He couldn't lift them up to see.
And I looked at him very long,
  And something in him looked at me.

And he was something like a cat
  That is asleep, and like a dog;
Or like a thing that's in the woods
  All day behind a log.

And then I was afraid of it,
  Of something that was sleeping there.

I didn't even say his name,
  But I came down the stair.

MY HEART

My heart is beating up and down,
  Is walking like some heavy feet.
My heart is going every day,
  And I can hear it jump and beat.

At night before I go to sleep
  I feel it beating in my head;
I hear it jumping in my neck
  And in the pillow on my bed.

And then I make some little words
  To go along and say with it—
    The men are sailing home from Troy,
      And all the lamps are lit.

    The men are sailing home from Troy,
      And all the lamps are lit.

Elizabeth Madox Roberts

SEMPER EADEM

FOURTH DIMENSION

His life was strangely hedged about
By three, though he seemed not to know it:
One whom he loved, who shut him out;
One hid her passion in her doubt;
One was too fond and wise to show it.

The first blew on desire's dark flame
Until he tossed with every flicker
In agonies of sad self-blame,
That left him tired, but not yet tame
Enough to cease love's tireless bicker.

The second tried in vain to bind him,
Uncertain of what stirred in each.
Walking through labyrinths to find him,
She saw him shorn, but could not blind him;
And silence was her wittiest speech.

The third had known him since she bore him;
And suffered, though she may have smiled,
To know that barren wishes tore him,
When one was ready to adore him
As if he were not still her child.

Too wise to hate the one he wanted,
Too fond to pity her he scorned,

Her hours, like his own, were haunted
By devils that might well have daunted
A monster likewise hoofed and horned.

The first, meeting his mother, knew her
A woman very like her own.
The second wondered how to woo her,
While ever seeking to eschew her,
Fearful of what she must have known.

And so their days were all one tangle
Of this, one dropped, and that, one dared.
While he, from his peculiar angle,
Half-wished that loneliness might strangle
What they so curiously shared.

OVERTONES

Keep up your talk—
There is no need for silence now.
I am content to listen, and watch you now.
Your voice stops while you walk.

You move about,
And toss back from your brow
The lock that always falls across your brow.
Your grin is tinged with doubt.

Einstein and art
And ranching—it goes on somehow.

Don't stop, or it will be too much somehow,
And you will hear my heart.

REFLECTIONS

Your eyes were strange with sorrow: were there tears
That touched their color to such troubled light?
Those mirrors wherein mine had shone so bright
Refused the image, looking on the years,
Like naked runners running upon spears,
That showed so impotently few tonight—
The pageant of a passion men requite
With death, and freedom whose chief wage is fears.

I would have outstared sorrow in your eyes,
But looking on them, mine reflected yours
As the most lucid pool shows stormy skies,
Cloud facing cloud, when deepest calm endures.
And though my lips had drunk your bitter wine,
You would have tasted bitterer, touching mine.

KNOWLEDGE

Now there is no confusion in our love—
For you are there
With the big brow, the cheek of tougher grain,
The rougher greying hair;
And I am here, with a woman's throat and hands.
We are apart and different.

And there is something difference understands
That peace knows nothing of.
It is the pain in pleasure that we seek
To kill with kisses, and revive
With other kisses;
For by our hurt we know we are alive.

The tides return into the salty sea,
And the sea-fingered rocks are swept and grey.
There are no secrets where the sea has crept,
But the sea
Has kept its ageless mystery.
And we,
Beaten by the returning passional tides,
Searched by the stabbing fingers,
Washed and lapped and worn by the old assault,
Knowing again
The bitterness of the receding wave,
With renewed wonder facing the old pain,
We are as close
As one wave fallen upon another wave;
We are as far
As the sky's star from the sea-shaken star.

Love is not the moon
Pulling the whole sea up to her.
And there is something darkness understands
These moons know nothing of.

Babette Deutsch

FOUR POEMS

IN THE BARN

The sun, in wanton pride,
Drenches the country-side
With spilt gold from his old autumnal store.
But Scipio sits within the barn's thick gloom,
The merest crack of light coming in the door—
Sits and husks the corn long after working hours.
Vainly for him the autumn bloom
Is on the flowers.
The inside of the barn is velvet black
Except where a gold thread runs along a crack;
And the inquisitive sun thrusts points of light
Through chink and cranny, piercing the midnight.
The dry husks rattle, and his shuffling feet
Keep time to what he sings—an elusive tune,
Husky and monotonous and sweet,
Scarce audible, so softly does he croon
To keep away the evil eye:

Everybody
Who is livin'
Got to die.

Across the evening fields the setting sun
Richly intones toil done.
The home-bound negroes idle in the lanes,
Gossiping as they go; coarse laughter falls

On the resonant air; from a far field cat-calls
Float over, and a banjo's strains.
Shucking corn in the darkness, Scipio in reply
Sits and sings his mournful, husky stave:

Wid a silver spade
You kin dig my grave;
Everybody
Who is livin'
Got to die.

STRANGE

We believed
That the tides of our being
Set to each other.

But when we came to speak,
There was a distance between us
More wide and strange
Than the silvery waste
Of the marsh under the moon.

And your voice came
From that untrodden stillness
Like the calling of some marsh creature
Disturbed—seeking.

And I, too, was dumb—frozen,
Like the flood-tide
And moon-silent marsh.

THE OUTCAST

Into the valleys I flee, into the shadows;
But there is no peace, no sanctuary.
The hills, like elephants,
Shoulder noiseless through the clouds
And close in on me.
Where shall I hide from the tread of their feet?

I have overset the gods in the temples, and there is none
to protect me—
The little gods of jade with staring eyes,
The great gold and black gods with foolish faces.

Tell me, little gods of the North and East, and of the
South and West,
How long shall my bones wait, lying on these rocks,
To become as white as the broken plaster
Of the images in the temple?
Tell me, true gods,
Speak a swift word!—
For the clouds descend in a hot white mist of wrath,
And through them stamp the elephants . . .
The terrible elephants . . .
Trumpeting . . .

SWAMP LILIES

Today I feel new-born, for I have seen
A stretch of cloistered wood thick-spread with green,

Where wet wild lilies grew on every side,
Streaming away—an immobile white tide.
Not as the sun that bursts upon our eyes
At morning, making glory of the skies,
But like the slow, pervading evening light
They filled the eye—a world of silvery white
Withdrawn and exquisite, as from the sod
They breathed the still inviolateness of God.

Josephine Pinckney

FORGOTTEN

How can I remember
  Autumn and pain,
When trees hold dreams
  In their arms again?

How can my heart break
  Till it cries?
The joy of summer
  Has made me wise.

I can't remember
  What hurt me so—
Autumn and winter
  Were so long ago.

Harold Vinal

NUMBERS

Three sheep graze on the low hill
Beneath the shadow of five trees.
    Three sheep!
    Five old sycamores!
(The noon is very full of sleep.
The noon's a shepherd kind and still.
The noon's a shepherd takes his ease
Beneath the shadow of five trees,
    Five old sycamores.)
Three sheep graze on the low hill.
Down in the grass, in twos and fours,
Cows are munching in the field.
Three sheep graze on the low hill:
Bless them, Lord, to give me wool.
Cows are munching in the field:
Bless them that their teats be full.
Bless the sheep and cows to yield
Wool to keep my children warm,
Milk that they should grow therefrom.

Three sheep graze on the low hill,
  Beneath five sycamores.
Cows are munching in the field,
  All in twos and fours.

On an elm-tree far aloof
There are nine-and-twenty crows,

Croaking to the blue sky roof
Fifteen hundred ancient woes.

In a cracked deserted house,
Six owls cloaked with age and dream—
In a cracked deserted house,
Six owls wait upon a beam,
Wait for the nocturnal mouse.

In the stackyard at my farm
There are fourteen stacks of hay.
    Lord, I pray
Keep my golden goods from harm,
Fourteen shining stacks of hay!

Fourteen shining stacks of hay,
Six owls, nine-and-twenty crows,
Three sheep grazing on the hill
  Beneath five sycamores,
Fat cows munching in a field,
  All in twos and fours—
Fat cows munching in a field,
Fourteen shining stacks of hay.

At a table in a room
Where beyond the window-frames
Glows the sweet geranium—
At a table in a room
My three children play their games
Till their father-poet come.

Stop a moment, listen, wait
Till a father-poet come—
Lovely ones of lovely names,
He shall not come late.

Fourteen shining stacks of hay,
Six owls, nine-and-twenty crows,
Fifteen hundred ancient woes,
Three sheep grazing on the hill
  Beneath five sycamores,
Fat cows munching in a field
  All in twos and fours—
Fourteen shining stacks of hay,
My three lovely children, one
Mother laughing like the sun,
Sweetheart laughing like the sun
  When the baby laughters run.

Now the goal I sought is won,
Sweetheart laughing like the sun,
Now the goal I sought is won,
  Sweet, my song is done.

Louis Golding

O CHANGING ONE

Sometimes, O changing one,
Your feet are like white foam
Riding the long blue rhythms of my thought—
Like foam on a subsiding lake
In the hour next before sunset.

And sometimes your feet are leaves
Red from the first frost,
Whirling into the corners of my mind,
Whirling into the sunlight again;
Dancing, chaotic,
Gay in their brief autumn.

But sometimes
Your feet are like black velvet,
And you move without sound within the shadows;
You circle the firelight of my thought.
And I, by the red fire that fights the shadows,
Wonder what prey you seek—
I, not wholly at ease.

William A. Norris

GOLDEN DARKNESS

THERE WAS A TIME

There was a time when I was shy and lonely,
  And stood in strange bewilderment apart;
And no one spoke to me, and silence only
  Would fold my songs into her tender heart.

There was a time when only windy darkness
  Would fan my dreams with glamoured loveliness.
But you have come, and nights are filled with starkness;
  And I am lonely for my loneliness.

Oh, you have come—and silence is a stranger,
  And darkness keeps aloof from my distress;
And you—oh, you are all too fraught with danger,
  And I am lonely for my loneliness.

CLOUDS AND WAVES

With bent heads hidden the clouds run by,
Muffled in shadow, across the sky.

With lowered eyes, in the darkness of the sea,
The hunched lean waves scud away fearfully.

How great is the wrong, and where is the place?
What is the truth that they cannot face?

COBWEBS

Rise in the cool dim dawn
  When a mist is hung on the pane—
The loose gray cobweb of the fog
  Spun by the rain.

When the sun's long golden fingers
  Have brushed it away—then go
And watch the sky through the tree-tops
  Fall like snow.

And after, when you are tired
  And twilight hangs on the leaves,
Listen—and the silence will tell you
  Why it grieves.

For the fog, the sky and the twilight
  Are the cobwebs that brush the eyes
When a man would enter the dusty door
  Of paradise.

GREY

A bleak wind rides on the waves,
  And the shadowy foam is hurled.
Grey rains are on the hills,
  And a grey dusk is over the world.

Bleak moods and shadowy moods
  Move like the moods of the sea;

The mist, a grey unspoken thought,
  Is looking strangely at me.

And I am lost in greyness—
  My dreams are still and furled;
For the grey rains are on the hills,
  And a grey dusk is over the world.

RAINS

In the country the rain comes softly with timid feet;
A grey silence is in her face, and strands of darkness
  blowing from her hair,
And trees are dark in her eyes, and the wind is a mournful
  gesture.
Softly the rain comes over the hills and her face is memory:
It is filled with the twilight blowing of waves and grasses;
It is filled with shadowy cloud-paws feeling among the
  valleys;
It is filled with the leap of trees that are instantly caught
  by the earth.
The spirit of all things breathes on the invisible pane of
  time,
And slowly out of the shadows the grey face of the rain
  comes into being—
Softly the rain comes over the hills and her face is sorrow.

But the rain in the city is a jazz rain:
The legs of the rain in the city are nimble—

She is loud on the stones, on the roof-tops, on the windows;
Her dancing is filled with the sway and the glitter of tinsel.
Behind her the street is a wide grin, showing the black teeth of houses—
The street is a wicked leer dark with ugly passion.
But though the laughter of the jazz rain is coarse in the gutter,
Though her legs are nimble and innumerable on the pavements,
Though the jazz rain speaks so loud,
The brazen rain has never a word for me.

THE GOLDEN FLEECE

I know that life is Jason,
And that beauty is the witch-maiden helping him.
I know that the soft, luminous night of stars
Is the golden fleece he is seeking.
I know that in the beginning
He sowed the boulders, the teeth of dead ages,
And the innumerable armored cities have arisen.
I know that he has thrown among them love and desire,
And they have warred and shall war with each other until the end.
And if you doubt the least word I have said,
Come out on the dark beach some strange summer night
And watch the huge quivering serpent of the ocean
Still coiled around the trunk of the tree of paradise.

BECAUSE

Because I have not kissed as yet one burning mouth,
I have kissed a hundred.
Because I have not looked into one pair of eyes,
A hundred have haunted me.
Because I have not lived one hour in passion's flame,
I have died in a hundred others.

MOTES

The stars are mystical motes
Delicately glimmering
In blue sunlight.
I move my hand
Through the elfin radiance,
And my fingers are strange
With dream and glamour.

THE SUBWAY IS LIT

The subway is lit like a great cathedral,
  And myriad shadows whisper and float.
But the eyes of darkness are filled with fury,
  And a scream of steel is in the wind's throat.
The trains are moving like things of madness,
  And the eyes of men have a glassy stare.
Where is the music of holiness?
  And where the uplifted face of a prayer?

THE BUBBLE

We have kings, and the deadly sins seven;
We have lives for all things that die;
We have wars and quite a bit of trouble:
But God, ensconced in his heaven,
Watches through air blue as sky,
And delights in his beautiful bubble.

THE RETURN

In some far and lonely midnight
  I shall arise as in a dream,
And part dark curtains on a strange room
  Where mysterious candles gleam.

I shall open an unknown book
  In that weird and wind-stirred place,
And come upon a poem
  With a sad face.

I shall listen to my dead heart's cry
  Faint through the years that are gone,
And I shall feel over my shoulder
  The Silence looking on.

And very softly he will touch me,
  And I shall turn toward the gloom;
He will take my arm and quietly
  Lead me out of the room.

Oscar Williams

COMMENT

HERE IN CASS STREET

WE should like to pass on to our readers a more liberal share of the "life" of the POETRY office—to introduce them to our extremely varied callers, show them scraps of our still more varied correspondence, let them read our contradictory clippings. And if only the seal of confidence could be removed, we should make them laugh by printing a few of our "museum" features—poems so amusingly bad that we could not bear to send them back without making copies for preservation.

One day, for example, the arriving editor discovers, so to speak, a foundling on the door-step—a young poet from New York or Oklahoma who has started out to see the world with a few dollars in his pocket, and who must find some kind of a job in State Street or La Salle to keep him fed and housed, and to oil the wheels of his journey. Again, an elderly poet-adventurer appears fresh from prison, where he had been tangled up in some friend's attempt at counterfeiting—a lank starveling figure, the gaunt picture of despair, but offering, to the editor's surprise, two or three acceptable poems; and leaping alive, even to a smile, at the actual receipt of a check. Or, a rainy morning is brightened with color by the visit of two quite astonishingly superb English ladies—a poet and her sister—who are speeding through the town

with their uncle, Sir Kenneth Somebody, and who leave us *édition-de-luxe* books and Queen of Sheba memories.

Helen Hoyt once gave us a guest book—it was while she was still Helen Hoyt, two years before her bridal New Year's day of 1921, when she became Mrs. William Whittingham Lyman out in California and took up her abode in Berkeley. Let us look over its entries since Christmas, and pause a moment with a few of the visitors:

There are Henry Bellamann and Glenn Ward Dresbach just before the turn of the year. Southern poets both, the one from South Carolina and the other New Mexico: Mr. Bellamann a musician, as well as president of the Columbia Poetry Society; and Mr. Dresbach an efficiency expert—a rare talent for a poet!—who had been making copper efficacious at Tyrone. And with the new year comes Edward Sapir from Ottawa, where he has been gathering and translating French-Canadian folk-songs. And bluff, black-bearded Jo Davidson, sculptor of all the war-heroes, draws his inky portrait in the book. And little Winifred Bryher writes her slender name there—the quiet English girl-author who was even then on her way to New York to surprise her friends by marrying Robert McAlmon.

Sara Bard Field, the warrior-suffragette from California; and Nora Douglas Holt, the beautiful bronze-colored founder and editor of the new and interesting Negro organ, *Music and Poetry*—these two are neighbors in the book. A week later comes John Drinkwater, and at the

end of March Franklin P. Adams, the St. Simeon Stylites of the New York *Tribune*. Next Clinton Masseck, now of Kansas, erstwhile a warrior in the most fiery battle-line of the Argonne. A few days later it is Nicolas Roerich, the big-brained, high-souled Russian painter and dreamer, whose pictures are a more vivid revelation than Lenin's politics; and whose poems—if we could get at them in the three or four books he has published, may be as full of color and vitality.

And so it goes. The correspondence is more full of contrasts, possibly, than the visitors. Bits of it come from remote corners of the earth, but most of it bears George Washington's familiar red portrait on the envelope. The editor is asked not only to criticize poems—that is an obvious and common request—but to advise about publishers, to prepare club programs; to write an article on Florence Kiper Frank or Haniel Long for the benefit of some college-student's thesis; to reveal the author of some wandering poem—usually an incredibly poor one; to save some hapless poet from starvation or get him out of jail; to pass judgment on some elaborate system of psycho-analysis, or on some meticulous questionnaire which is to reveal with mathematical accuracy the ability of students in a certain great university to judge poetry—a questionnaire which so befuddles the editor's brain that judging poetry becomes a madhouse dance. These are but a few of the demands put forth by acquisitive minds—sometimes of marvellous ingenuity, and still more marvel-

lous confidence in the editor's lavishness of time, interest and spirit to meet them.

The poets themselves are usually more reasonable than these questioners who are studying or writing about them. Of course now and then the ego flaps its wings and temperament becomes temper, but on the whole they are tolerant of the editor's short-comings and astonishingly patient during that too-long period which usually divides acceptance from publication. They are very different—these poets: one, an I. W. W. coal-miner; another, a bedridden invalid in New Zealand; number three, a fine lady in the smartest of smart sets; number four, a plantation Negro in Georgia; number five, a Syrian rug-dealer; number six, a live-wire reporter on the New York *Scald;* seven, a corporation lawyer; eight, a little crippled seamstress sewing and writing in a wheeled chair; nine, a lovely red-haired siren, the heroine of an hundred romances; ten, a lonely spinster, inaccessible in her emotional desert; eleven, a half-mad starveling whose little gleam of genius may be extinguished by niggardly denial of light and air and food for body and soul; and twelve, fortune's favorite, whose gleam may be extinguished by the sheer mass and weight of his possessions and opportunities. And there are the married and the single, the too much married and too little, the much divorced and the undivorced, and the careless few who get on without any of these formalities.

In short, there are today five hundred and ninety-six

names in POETRY's card-index of accepted poets; and a history, thrilling but never to be fully revealed, goes with each card. Nearly a score of nationalities are represented either directly or through immigration, and forty-one of our forty-eight states, besides the District of Columbia and Hawaii. One of the severest shocks of the editor's career is the discovery that Indiana is not among them. Are there no poets left in Riley's own state, the state where they were wont to foregather and go on pilgrimages? Or have the poets of Indiana, one and all, boycotted POETRY? Anyway, Indiana is missing from our list, along with Delaware, Idaho, North Dakota, Mississippi, North Carolina and Utah.

It's a long and crowded trail we have travelled these eight-and-a-half stirring years. *H. M.*

THE NEBRASKA LAUREATE

The legislature of the state of Nebraska has fitly honored its most conspicuous poet-citizen by appointing him Poet Laureate of the state. Mr. Neihardt earns this distinction not only by his artistic achievement in general, but also by the fact that, as the resolution puts it, he "has written a national epic wherein he has developed the mood of courage with which our pioneers explored and subdued our plains, and thus has inspired in Americans that love of the land and its heroes whereby great national traditions are built and perpetuated."

We congratulate Nebraska upon its gracious decree, and Mr. Neihardt upon the official appreciation of his state. The appreciation might have been further emphasized by a salary or some form of financial award, but perhaps that is too ideal an expression of truly poetic justice to expect at present.

We have criticized Mr. Neihardt's artistic principles and methods in the writing of his epic narratives, but a difference of opinion in detail does not prevent our appreciation of his artistic sincerity and quality, and of the value of his exploration of a field too little recognized in the arts. It will be remembered that one volume of the projected trilogy, *The Song of Three Friends*, shared last year with the *Poems* of the late Gladys Cromwell first honors in the P. S. A. prize award for the best book of verse published by a poet of the United States during the year 1919.

The New York *Evening Mail* discovers "subtle Sinn-Fein propaganda" in the new Nebraska laureateship. This would seem to be straining a point, even if Mr. Neihardt were an Irishman, which no one ventures to allege of a poet born in Illinois of middle-western ancestry. However, this laureateship is not quite the first, the *Nebraska State Journal* to the contrary notwithstanding; for in 1919 the legislature of California bestowed a similar honor upon Miss Ina Coolbrith in declaring her, by official decree, "The Loved Laurel-crowned Poet of California."

H. M.

REVIEWS

A CENSUS SPIRITUAL

Domesday Book, by Edgar Lee Masters. Macmillan Co.

Mr. Masters is both a lawyer and a poet—a fact which has advantages and disadvantages. As a lawyer, it makes him one of the shrewdest, most keenly imaginative cross-examiners who ever turned inside-out the soul of an unfortunate witness; and, on the other hand, it probably tempts him away from legal drynesses and asperities. As a poet, it gives him a comprehensive and sympathetic experience of the "innards" of life—the human motives and processes, enforcing upon him respect for the truth, for all the aspects and values in any given "case"; and, on the other hand, it carries these qualities too far toward absolute legal justice, involving the precision and prolixity of an argument or brief, with its thorough and searching statements of all aspects of a given question.

The mere use of a ten-syllable iambic line through hundreds of pages of course does not make a poem; it may as well be admitted that many of these monologues are throughout the baldest prose, and that even the finest of them have passages which strain the rather liberal amenities usually accorded to the epic bard. Indeed, a more exacting taste would have struck out quite a number—the statements of people whose tangent touch upon Elenor Murray was too remote to be artistically relevant.

However, after granting the numerous and manifest

deductions, *Domesday Book* establishes its epic claim. Not by accomplishing its specific charge, to be

> a census spiritual
> Taken of our America—

although perhaps it comes nearer than any other book to such a prodigious achievement—but by the sheer immensity and weight of its masses, the depth and richness of its colors, all thrown together into a rough shapeliness, and charged with a rude glamour, like a mountain lifted against the sunset fires of the sky. The mountain has not been molded and perfected by art, in all details it is faulty; yet there it stands, of a truth and beauty formidable and unquestionable.

Mr. Masters' book, whether a complete "census spiritual" or not, is life—modern life, unfaltering, uncompromising and unashamed; not a mere photograph, moreover, but a transfigured vision presenting the beauty and terror inherent in the human tragedy—in our modern human tragedy, which always seems half wrought out, infinitely complicated, unachieved, a thing to laugh as well as to weep. Like all artists of power and sweep, this poet neither palliates nor apologizes. He carries his heroine and her friends through deeds of vulgar disrepute and even crime, and yet brings them out unbereft of piteous dignity and beauty. He accepts all, with understanding and sympathy for human frailty and aspiration.

Certain of the actors in the ever-widening circles of this drama confess themselves with ruthless precision, so that

we know them completely and recognize their hard dilemma. Henry Murray, for example, the ineffectual father who sees his girl slipping away and agonizes because he is powerless to hold her:

> This daughter and myself, while temperaments
> Kept us at swords' points, while I saw in her
> Traits of myself I liked not, also traits
> Of the child's mother which I loathe, because
> They have undone me.

And Gregory Wenner, futile both as business man and lover. And Gottlieb Gerald, absorbed in making pianos and dreams. And the slap-dash Alaska man and the cheaply second-rate Barrett Bays—both accepting all they could get for as slight a return as possible. And finally Elenor Murray herself:

> Who was this woman?
> This Elenor Murray was America.
> Corrupt, deceived, deceiving, self-deceived,
> Half-disciplined, half-lettered, crude and smart;
> Enslaved yet wanting freedom; brave and coarse,
> Cowardly, shabby, hypocritical;
> Generous, loving, noble, full of prayer;
> Scorning, embracing rituals, recreant
> To Christ so much professed; adventuresome;
> Curious, mediocre, venal; hungry
> For money, place, experience; restless—no
> Repose, restraint; before the world made up
> To act and sport ideals—go abroad
> To bring the world its freedom, having choked
> Freedom at home: the girl was this because
> These things were bred in her—she breathed them in
> Here where she lived and grew.

Yet that word, however searching, is not all. One of the jurymen protests:

> Look at her—she's brave,
> Devoted, loyal, true and dutiful.
> She's will to life, and through it senses God,
> And seeks to serve the cosmic soul.

And with all potencies clamorous but impotent within her; giving herself away generously, passionately, but always wastefully, she passes by and goes out like a little flickering torch borne by Fate through the high winds of Time.

Does the poet prove his thesis? Does he make this girl—restless, sterile, erotic, but somehow clinging to, even while violating, a certain integrity of soul—a symbol of our country of tireless searching, immense achievement and fertile dreams? Probably most of us will deny the authority and completeness of the picture; probably the most searching critical challenge to this epic bard would be a demand for a hero, or heroine—for a single luminous soul to whom our hope and faith might cling. The heroic is found in life, and in all the great epics of the past. Perhaps it is not justly evident here.

However, whether we grant the main thesis or not, the book has immensity of scope and power. It is a modern tale of psychological adventure; grouping somewhat with *The Ring and the Book*, no doubt, but taking an every-day American life, through peace and war, as its text, instead of a mediaeval Italian crime. It is a rounding-up of our

modern human democracy by a poet of profound experience and insight. *H. M.*

LITTLE THEATRE RHYTHMS

Plays for Merry Andrews, by Alfred Kreymborg. Sunwise Turn, New York.

There are certain Broadway critics, using the term generically, who decry the potentialities of the "Little Theatres" because they do not function like Big Theatres. Without considering the medium, or the plays written and produced through this medium, these critics damn them as piffling. It will require a new hatch of critics to handle this art of the Little Theatre.

Because a small group gathers to hear subtleties in humor, minute shadings in tone, experiments in rhythms; to concentrate on complexities or relax to simplicities, one may not necessarily infer that its blood is thin. A healthy audience functions in various ways; it does not always wear its heart on its sleeve, or stand in a ten-acre lot to hear its soul bellowed to the highways.

Alfred Kreymborg's soul would feel cramped in a ten-acre lot, whereas it expands in intimacy. He has accepted the Little Theatre as his natural medium, accepted it also as a form of art to be expressed through poetry, music, and dance. We have here no note-book jottings from real life, dialogue heard in passing, sketch life-class work. In the *Plays for Merry Andrews*, the use of sug-

gestion is not so remote as with many of the Fifth Avenue school of "opacity." In a play the poet must consider that the auditor does not register with the same concentration as the reader. Mr. Kreymborg's simplicity appears to be guileless, but there is always the suggestion under his naive surfaces. His rhythms and images are easy to imitate, but not his charm and his humor; and to capture his agile handling of suggestion is a challenge—the quiet glance with a keen edge back of it which points up to a dart and shoots through so deftly that we are unaware of its awareness.

In the matter of rhythm, he is not an "eye poet." He is a musician arranging and combining words as notes and musical phrases. He writes gavottes, scherzos, minuets and fugues; and he sings and dances his thoughts about the stage. Often his verbal attempts at polyphonic musical forms result only in the husk of tone. His words do not always vibrate, but on the whole there is a blending of tone through the combining of vibrations from his succession of sounds. His rhythms riot in their variety through all of his plays, which helps to promote the feeling of dance. When his staccato verges on the monotonous he gives it a fillip with a sudden turn or lift. One culminating effect which he uses is to lead us up to the height of expectancy, and leave his suggestion suspended in mid-air while we go soaring on the impetus.

The rhythms of his prose are neither "intentionally odd" nor "intentionally dark"; they are patterned to

express his whimsical personality according to the varied meanings of his fanciful plot. Take a passage of staccato from *Vote the New Moon*. The citizens are voting, they are definite and determined, and although their hammers have been dropped the concise rapping is continued in the speech:

Crier. Burgher, what do you mean by "One for the red"?—
Burgess, you by "One for the blue"?
Burgher. I mean—
Burgess. I mean—
Crier. What do you mean?
Burgher. We mean—
Burgess. We're tired—
Crier. Tired?
Burgher. Of old moons—
Burgess. We want—
Crier. You want?
Duo. A new moon!

He also uses his staccato to convey his numerous sprightly moods. Again in *Vote the New Moon* the harmonized resolve to vote for the purple is expressed in a fine blending of resounding vibration:

Burgher. One for the purple—
Burgess. One for the purple—
Burgher. One for the purple—
Burgess. One for the purple—

ending in a strong chord from the Crier—

Crier. Blasphemous!

Although this volume is freer from the fault shown in his earlier group of *Poem Mimes*—the fault of assembling

poems more or less related into a play instead of conceiving the play as a whole poem, in quality it falls short of the earlier book, which is consistently fanciful, poetic, musical. The *Plays for Merry Andrews* is made up of two plays in this earlier manner—*Vote the New Moon* and *Monday*—whose quality is up to his standard while they have developed in form. The two attempts to mix the reality of farce and burlesque with the fanciful result in *At the Sign of the Thumb and Nose* and *Uneasy Street*. Of these the first is the more successful, the second being a rather doubtful experiment for the Little Theatre. The bulk of the coffin would crowd the humor off the boards. It begins in irony and ends in farce. The first half is nicely pointed and balanced, but this is lost in the later confusion of a rather commonplace dialogue and a bizarre ending. *The Silent Waiter* is a topic discussed with some new angles, but it is not a good play. The handling of the window panels, the hands, and the headless waiter, while piquing the interest at first, proves tricky. The end of the discussion is trite.

The danger of the subtleties of the Little Theatre becoming effete is obvious, but then there is the danger of the Big Theatre becoming banal. The two theatres cannot be paralleled—they are two different mediums.

Alfred Kreymborg's danger lies in his facility to sing, to be whimsical, to charm; in the temptation to spread his material too thin and caper for the fun of capering.

Laura Sherry

NIGHTMARE FINGERS

Resurrecting Life, by Michael Strange. Alfred A. Knopf.
Clair de Lune, by Michael Strange. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

The New York *Times*, quoted on the jacket of the first of these books, recommends it as follows:

> Michael Strange is a signature underneath which can always be found images, phrases, the embodiment in colorful words of things seen or felt or thought, so unusual and so outstanding that they strike the attention at once and remain in the memory.

Benjamin De Casseres says of it:

> The poems of Michael Strange do not "fly to the eyes." They touch you remotely at first as with nightmare fingers. You go back to study them, to concentrate on them, to marry them.

In the light of such praise, it is only fair to give an example:

> O those vast limbs in the chrysalis of me—
> O this titanic aerial being so fettered yet
> In the slime of my defective understanding—
> This God with spheres nestling in His palm
> Asleep in me yet—
> And veiled in the stupor of my fear of things
> Concerning this one tiny world.

However, in case one quotation is insufficient, and because the poems have as yet only touched us "with nightmare fingers" whereas someone else may want to "marry them," it may be reassuring to quote *Vision* in its entirety:

> I will follow the inward chime
> Back through empurpling cups of concave hills—
> Back through a swaying clot of drowned faces—

(All fastened and by nightmare pain into the sedges of memory)
Back through those negative rivers stilled past egress—
And out at last beyond brightening grasses—
Grasses rushing up into hills—peaks—
And up through these through a fume of clouds—aye at last into ether—
Ether—bright with those silver tracks of planet-visiting angels—
And austerely fragrant from the trailing of their doom-lined scarves—
Aye—out into ether humming from the dart of stars
Shaken by a choral thunder—
Until at last appearing among arching naves—
These ascending in architectural jet—
And arrested in vast foaming coils of livid lace—
And where—enlarging at the farthest end of distance—
The Eucharist—chromatic-rayed
And holding forth its Mystic Tenant—
Of Transfigured Rest.

Clair de Lune, the play by this author which John Barrymore produced recently in New York, is at least written in prose. *Marion Strobel*

THE SILVER STALLION

Young Girl and Other Poems, by Hildegarde Flanner; with an introduction and decorations by Porter Garnett. H. S. Crocker Co., San Francisco.

Poems for Men, by John Austin. Basil Blackwell, Oxford.

Star-drift, by Brian Padraic O'Seasnain. Four Seas Co.

Poems and Essays, by Alfred Hitch. Privately printed, Stockton, Cal.

Moods of Manhattan, by Louise Mallinckrodt Kueffner. Modernist Press, New York.

The Blue Crane, by Ivan Swift. James T. White & Co.

High Company, by Harry Lee. Fred. A. Stokes Co.
A Music-teacher's Note-book, by Henry Bellamann. Poetry Book Shop, New York.

Wading through these young first books reminded me of a time I had last summer looking for a run-away horse in the Maine woods. The silver stallion appears for an instant, now and then, but it is an uncomfortable business looking for him through the uncouth growths.

Possibly Hildegarde Flanner offers us freer and wider glimpses through the leaves of her little volume. Indeed, her book is a small wood of white birch-trees, pale and slender and frail. The poems are delicate, and in *This Morning* she offers us a moment like this:

> After the emotion of rain
> The mist parts across the morning,
> Like the smile of one
> Who has laughed in sleep
> And cannot remember why.

There is a quaint simplicity in *Discovery*, but in the main the book lacks music, though one finds a hint of music and even strength in *Communion*. *Young Girl* received last year the Emily Chamberlain Cook Prize at the University of California; and she is almost, if not entirely, worthy of the beautiful dress and golden ornaments which Porter Garnett and the Crocker Company have so generously given her.

Mr. Austin's *Poems for Men*, if more virile, are full of a cold reserve, and a traditional and hampering growth of words; and coming, as they do, in the newer and freer

forms, they are but the wolf in sheep's clothing. The book is studied stuff, impersonal and unstirring, but in the rhyming verses the poet confesses a little, and in *A Bedroom* one comes on—

> The fancied forest of Desire,
> Among whose unseen leaves
> Flits the golden-feathered bird.

I have read and re-read *Star-drift* and *Poems and Essays*, trying to be convinced that they are poetry. I cannot doubt that Mr. O'Seasnain and Mr. Hitch appreciate the glittering of great cities at night and the beauty of a dawn over the mountains; I cannot doubt that the wonder of earth has a word for them, that they have ideas, that Mr. O'Seasnain is "furious with the littlenesses of life," and that Mr. Hitch sees "his old age with its white hair—a signal of distress, white flag of surrender," and is sometimes struck with the futility of his own too many words. But what has all this to do with the great silver stallion whose hoof-beats are shaking the unknown winds like curtains over the hills?

Somewhat removed from forests and the mythological silver stallion, is Miss Kueffner's *Moods of Manhattan*. In *Afterword* she begs us not to ask, Is it prose?—is it verse? And we shall spare her the inconvenience of asking her, Is it poetry? We shall not compare or contrast her with Whitman or Sandburg whom she has obviously imitated, and the only little comment we make is, that her work is very much like Oppenheim—at his worst.

The Blue Crane, by Ivan Swift, is crammed with respectability and politeness, and a triteness that sometimes washes its face. Old-fashioned words like *yon*, *thy*, *full sure* are found all over the book. And for Mr. Swift "A quiet place is full of eloquent whispers," a tree is "a trim sentry," and "I fain would laugh," if you please!

Captain Harry Lee probably realizes that his *High Company* is shredded prose, as he subtitles it *Sketches*. Some of these are good war sketches, simple and sincere, and there is sympathy and drama in *Winged Heels*. Others are sentimental and melodramatic, and through the whole book runs the so-called free-verse style of certain cigarette advertisements. John Burroughs, who in a recent issue of *Current Opinion* called Mr. Sandburg's poetry "Bolshevic trash", wrote on the cover of *High Company*, "These poems have great merit; they strike me as about the best free-verse poetry I have seen."

I have saved the last book for a little relief. One finds in Mr. Bellamann's poems a precision and a choice of words that give a mood without any fringes, or "muddle, mist and moonshine"—as in *Yellow Leaves:*

> Yellow leaves among the green,
> Like gold coins
> Deep in old fountains.

In *Dans Le Sillage*, the poet touches off some of his contemporaries:

> There's Fletcher,
> Painting with frost
> On silk watered like an opal sea.

Amy Lowell rides like Joan
Under colored banners,
Flashing a thousand lights
From her two-edged sword.

Ezra Pound mutters darkly
Behind a Chinese veil.

And here one strikes the gravest fault in the book: there is too much of Fletcher, Amy Lowell and Ezra Pound in the poems.

If these first books are a bit discouraging, still

The winds are neighing
Amid the monotonous hills—

and the silver stallion may be not far away.

Oscar Williams

WHO WRITES FOLK-SONGS?

Poetic Origins and The Ballad, by Louise Pound. Macmillan Co.

Just when and how the theory of the communal origin of folk-song, and hence of poetry itself, came to be evolved, I do not know. But for many years students of folk-lore have held tenaciously to the idea that folk-poetry is of crowd origin—i. e., the spontaneous improvisation of many minds, preferably during a dance or some community festival.

The idea is very like, and no doubt based upon, that similar "play-instinct" theory of the origin of art—a theory which saw nothing incongruous in the analogy between creative effort and a sportive calf's jumping!

To me the belief that the genesis of poetry, or of rhythm, was in the "hand-clapping and thigh-slapping" of primitive people during a dance has always seemed unnecessarily far-fetched. As if man were outside creation, and some special arbitrary means had to be devised for inculcating in him the laws of that world of which he is a part! And also, how account then for the genesis of space-rhythm? Did the primitive potter and artist evolve their volumes and lines to a similar bodily accompaniment? And should the artist today, who wishes to regain the old simplicity, take a twirl or two and jump like Nijinsky between each stroke that he gives to his canvas?

Miss Pound does not attempt to explain psychologically the beginnings of poetry. Her method is historical, and she adheres very strictly to the task she has set herself, which is to show: that the classic English and Scotch ballads, such as are preserved in the Percy and Child collections, could be only the work of individual poets, and not of a crowd or "festal throng"; and that the accepted belief in the communal origin of folk-poetry thus falls down, so far as it is based specifically upon these ballads. Miss Pound then uses the evidence of the living folk-poetry nearest at hand—that of the American Indian, the Negro, and the cowboy—to show that it too is almost always of individual authorship (and most markedly inferior when, presumably, it is not); but that it is, in any case, of a character essentially different from the Child ballads, these latter being of a much higher artistic

order and obviously the work of individual poets above the peasant average, whether in that time or this.

One chapter seems to me to be missing from Miss Pound's book which would make it finally conclusive: a chapter on the medieval troubadours of the Continent. With this as a background, the conviction that the Percy and Child ballads must have been the work of individual authors, who held as stock-in-trade the poetic traditions of an older guild of minstrels and entertainers, would be inescapable.

Apart from the specific problem of comparison involved, Miss Pound's summary of the origins of our indigenous folk-poetry is exceedingly interesting. Beginning with the poetry of the American Indian, she shows that the individual poet is as well known in the most primitive tribe as in our own more sophisticated society; and that there is no evidence that Indian poetry, although communally sung, is so composed. She shows also that many of the Negro spirituals are based upon the white man's hymns, from which their form and substance are largely derived. Thus although the individual authorship of the spirituals may be lost sight of, their parentage at least is not of crowd origin; and the additions made by the Negro congregation in singing these songs are mostly in the nature of refrain.

As for the American cowboy songs, for which Mr. Lomax has claimed a communal origin, Miss Pound shows that almost all of these are of known authorship; although

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she does not on this account deny their genuine folk character, nor (as Professor Gerould in the New York *Evening Post* implies) discount them as mere "derelicts" because they have been based upon earlier songs or adapted to familiar tunes. On this score one would have to call many of Burns' poems mere derelicts, and discard with them as well a large body of accepted folk-songs.

But Miss Pound's definition of folk-poetry is perhaps wider than many folk-lore scholars will accept. She says:

> All types of song are folk-songs, for the literary historian, which fulfil two tests: the people must like them and sing them—they must have "lived in the folk-mouth"; and they must have persisted in oral currency through a fair period of years. They must have achieved an existence not dependent upon a printed original. . . . Whatever has commended itself to the folk-consciousness, and has established currency for itself apart from written sources, is genuine folk-literature.

By this she does not mean, of course, that the song must never have had a printed origin, but that it must have become independent of this by being transplanted into the folk-memory. If the folk-lore scholars object to the inclusiveness of this definition, they will have to admit that many of their own restrictions would, if collectively applied, rule out practically the whole body of accepted folk-song, including the classic English ballads.

Thus, if known authorship discounts the term "folk-poetry," then the poetry of the American Indian is not folk-poetry. If printed sources are not allowed, then all the old ballads collected in broadsides or chap-books must go. If the fact that *The Cowboy's Lament* was adapted

from a popular Irish song of the eighteenth century makes its folk pretensions insecure, then *Barbara Allen*, which was also a stage song, will have to be discarded. In fact, if all the arbitary barbed-wire fences of the folk-lorists are heeded, what will be left of the open range of folk-song? The professor of folk-song, like the melancholy cowboy, will have to go.

We are faced then with the necessity of accepting a wider definition of folk-song; or we may be brought to the pass of confessing that there is no such thing—there is only poetry, of various kinds. Also it may as well be admitted that folk-songs are as diversified in character as any other kind of poetry; and it is impossible to make any one type the "norm" to which all other examples must conform. Certainly the classic English ballads can not—as is too often done—be made the touchstone of what is or is not folk-poetry. Theirs is a highly specialized form; their authors were undoubtedly fairly sophisticated poets; and we have every right to believe that the ballads became folk-songs by the well-known process of descent.

In other words, we must recognize two broad sources of folk-song: one of the soil, as with genuinely primitive people like the American Indian (though none the less of individual origin); and the other of the stage, the church, the court, or the city, descending again to the soil and the folk, there to be rediscovered as folk-song.

Such ideas as these, presented by Miss Pound, are sufficiently radical to meet much opposition from the

adherents of the accepted belief in the communal "crowd" origin of folk-song. But just one thing is needed from Miss Pound's opponents to prove her theory a house of cards, and that is some evidence of a crowd or group improvisation of the ballads, or of any poetry higher than the nursery-rhyme type used in games. Did anyone ever see it happen? *A. C. H.*

CORRESPONDENCE

PROFESSOR PHELPS AND ROSTAND

My dear POETRY: William Lyon Phelps has set my nerves cringing—is it possible that a Yale University professor should write the silly pompous windy stuff about Edmond Rostand which appears in the April *Yale Review!*

What a pity, when the whole world is trying to get a clear insight into things, to read such trashy stuff! Fortunately we know better, but some Frenchmen may judge American criticism and clearness of perception by Mr. Phelps' oracular utterances. Note the wisdom of this:

> Creative genius is the most valuable gift that man can receive.

Isn't this a wonderfully stamped medal?—

> He is a poet and a playwright, but above all, he is a magician.

But I wouldn't care about Mr. Phelps' platitudes if he didn't pretend to judge France and French drama with the same sweeping alacrity. I shall not trouble you with a reply *en forme*. Suffice it to say that nobody here with

a sane mind thinks Rostand a "national" poet; and that anyhow poetry had nothing to do with our aching backs, our smarting feet—and final triumph. Nobody but dusty mediaeval people can foster such illusions.

The article contains such luminous ideas as these:

> We must go back to La Fontaine for anything approaching the human manipulation of the animal kingdom.

> No modern dramatist has reached the Shakespearean level except Rostand.

If Mr. Phelps wants to understand our modern drama better, let him come to *Le Vieux Colombier* with Copeau as a director, to *Le Théatre des Arts* and a few others. Let him not forget, above all, that what we applaud is a dozen immortal masterpieces, among which we do not count *L'Aiglon, Cyrano, or Chantecler.* *Jean Catel*

Paris: April 25th, 1921.

NOTES

Marjorie Allen Seiffert (Mrs. Otto S.), of Moline, Ill., has appeared frequently in POETRY, and in 1919 her dialogue, *The Old Woman*, received one of our annual prizes. Her book, *A Woman of Thirty*, was published the same year by Alfred A. Knopf.

Babette Deutsch (now Mrs. A. Yarmolinsky), of New York, is the author of *Banners* (Geo. H. Doran Co.). Harcourt, Brace & Howe will publish next autumn an anthology of Russian poetry selected and translated by Mr. and Mrs. Yarmolinsky.

Mr. Oscar Williams, a Russian by birth, resident in New York but now sojourning in Chicago, will publish next autumn, through the Yale Press, his first book of verse.

The other poets of this month are new to our readers.

Mr. Louis Golding, of London, is the author of *Sorrows of War*, published in this country by E. P. Dutton & Co. A second book of poems, *Shepherd Singing Ragtime*, will soon appear in England. His first novel, *Forward from Babylon*, is one of six recently selected as the best of 1920-21 in competition for the *Vie Heureuse* prize in Paris.

Miss Elizabeth Roberts, of Chicago, who has appeared in various magazines, will soon publish a book of poems, *Under the Tree*.

Ditto Mr. Harold Vinal, of Boston, whose book will be entitled *April Flame*.

Miss Josephine Pinckney, of Charleston, has published little as yet. Her poem, *In the Barn*, received recently a prize from the Poetry Society of South Carolina.

Mr. William A. Norris is a young poet of Milwaukee, Wis.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

Legends, by Amy Lowell. Houghton Mifflin Co.
Songs in the Common Chord, by Amelia E. Barr. D. Appleton & Co.
Spanish Moss and English Myrtle, by Margaret Dashiell. Stratford Co.
The Two Captains, by Craven Langstroth Betts. Alfred Allen Watts Co., New York.
A Love Cycle, by Margery Mayo. Privately printed, Denver.
Souvenirs, by Badry Farkouh. Privately printed.
Ireland, Broadway and Other Loves, by Mary Fleming. Guido Bruno, New York.
The Mystic Warrior, by James Oppenheim. Alfred A. Knopf.
The Ruined Barn and Other Poems, by A. Hugh Fisher. Selwyn & Blount, London.
Poems New and Old, by John Freeman. Harcourt, Brace & Howe.

PLAYS:

Clair de Lune, by Michael Strange. G. P. Putnam's Sons.
The Cult of Content, by Noel Leslie. Four Seas Co.

PROSE:

The Sacred Band: A Litany of Ingratitude, by Guido Bruno. New York.

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Poetry

A Magazine of Verse

Edited by Harriet Monroe

August 1921

Growth, by Charles R. Murphy
Hoofs and Haloes
by David O. Hamilton
Beyond Sorrow
by Eda Lou Walton
Florence Mixter, DuBose Heyward

543 Cass Street, Chicago

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Poetry
A Magazine of Verse

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NO. V

AUGUST 1921

GROWTH

ADVENT

OUT of a silence greater than all words;
Over the unspeakable, dumb,
Everlasting hills
With their muter herds;
Swifter than a blade that kills;
Mightier than prayer;
Fairer than the dawn
When some dew yet remains unbroken;
Stronger than despair;
From the unspoken to the spoken,
While the heart rests momently;
Lovely as the half-uttered words of a child,
More delicate, more mild;
Terrible as the torn breasts of anguish

When strong wills languish:
Suddenly, dreadfully, exquisitely,
Love, death, and God shall come.

SOWN

Rain and the patience of the planted field,
Grey skies that hasten to the need
Of brown moistening earth, and to the sealed
Faint harvest in the unbroken seed—
Patience for waiting give us! O planted men,
Who waits your budding and your heaped
Flowers of death? Again, again
Perhaps ye shall return—the reapers, not the reaped—
And, braver than corn-seed hid away together,
Of our meagre or our mighty yield
Shall wake for the gathering in harvest weather.

TO EARTH

Oh, fortunate the waiting that shall end in wonder,
And blessed now the patience that is in thy biding;
For now are the herded clouds and the wild rain's thunder
Over the roof of thy quiet seeds' hiding.

We too, O earth, shall need thy blessedness of waiting
For the green flowering of pastures, when the panting
Storm shall cease; though blood be the rain that is abating,
And men be the seeds of our wild planting.

WINTER

Now are ye lean, O trees, and shaped for soaring
  Over the sacred snow that hides the land;
Now after stress of bitter storms endured
  On the spent earth unmutinous ye stand.

Only your faces now are turned not earthward,
  However deep your roots are clasped there.
With the gaunt gesture of a saint's uprising,
  Ye are the resurrection that is prayer.

SPRING

Trees have a gesture of departure,
    Yet forever stay;
Into what eager land they'd travel
    No man may say.

In the spring they stand on tip-toe;
    Yet, self-willed, remain
In autumn to let earthward
    Their hopes like rain.

Yet forever a new spring cometh,
    And their muteness swells
To the voice of one long risen
    For long farewells;

Who with steps of eternal patience,
    In eternal quest,

Would venture a truth too lofty
    To be expressed;

Whose heart at times is burdened,
    When no dream consoles,
With a heritage too mighty
    For rooted souls.

HUMILITY

Open the doors of temples, scorn
Their veils! Yet in the flight of bird on sea,
In the fall of leaf from tree,
In the green patient spears of grain, in the torn
Sides of mountains where some verdure clings—
In all these things—
We have enough to brood on till we be
Ready and humble as the corn.

MID-MAY

Put aside your words, and there are left
Stones of the grey walls and apple-trees;
And in the flesh and mind, and in what seems
Birthing almost of an immortal soul,
Virginity and fortitude and hope—
Delicate as blossoms on the gnarled limbs
White, grey and green above the risen grass.

Charles R. Murphy

HOOFS AND HALOES

TE DEUM

Out in the hot sun I saw Satan stand:
  He stroked the peaches with his finger-tips,
And burst the melons open in his hand,
  And squirted the fat grapes between his lips.
He cracked an apple, and deep in the rift
  Of snowy meat his yellow teeth he thrust.
A daisy from the grass he plucked and sniffed—
  His fiery breath soon charred it into dust.
He pinched the purple plums, and playfully
  Took up his tail and twirled it round and round
To lash the gold leaves from a maple-tree,
  And laughed—the birds fled screaming at the sound.
He swung the boughs, and with his sharp horns pricked
  The pears as they went swinging through the air,
And drove his hoof into the ground, and kicked,
  Stirring the damp earth through the grasses there;
Then tore the tangled undergrowth apart
  Till in its shadow he was deftly placed,
And stretched and said: "I marvel at God's art!
  The earth could not be formed more to my taste."

THE IDIOT

When earth was madly green he lay
  And mocked his shadow's dancing feet,

Or from his laughter ran away
  To watch the poppies burn the wheat.

But when the frozen leaves whirled by
  And colored birds were blown afar,
He climbed the bitter winter sky
  And hanged himself upon a star.

BEAUTY IN FOURTH STREET

I

It was not strange that Beauty found
  Our path in June, and eagerly
Thrust up the gay flowers through the ground
  And put a bird on every tree.

But strange it was when skies were grey
  That Beauty followed where we led,
And sat beside our stove all day,
  And lay at night upon our bed.

II

I live with Beauty, and across the way
  I see a shabby park where women sit
And scold the dirty children from their play,
  While old men shift their wrinkled legs and spit.

David Osborne Hamilton

So close to me these dusty lives go past—
  Shall I cry out how Beauty came to me?
O futile lips, be still! O heart, close fast!
  Break not with joy, lest you set Beauty free!

OUR TIME

Once more earth bellows with the lust
  Of rolling drums. Once more we win with fire
The passing wind, and perish for the dust
  Of man's desire.

Fierce as the tiger in the night,
  And greedy as the swine that roots the clod
Is man, whose spirit of eternal light
  Moves into God.

David Osborne Hamilton

MEMORY

I walked with you beside the orchard bars,
  Where the still plum-tree drops her whiteness down.
You kissed my brow: your kiss was like a crown.
  You kissed my mouth: my crown was set with stars.

Margaret Belle Houston

POEMS

ALL SOULS' EVE

Hark!—do you hear the choral dead?
Forgotten now their pride
Who on this night would have us know
They passed unsatisfied.

They shiver like the thin brown leaves
Upon a sapless tree,
Clinging with palsied, withered might
To their identity.

Their voices are the unearthly winds
That die before the dawn;
And each one has some tale to tell,
And, having told, is gone.

. . . . . .

Ah!—you who come with sea-blue eyes,
And dead these hundred years,
Be satisfied! I hold the cup
Still brimming with your tears.

CHINESE EPITAPH

She was a Manchu lady . . .
Near the tomb where she lies

Broods an ancient Buddha with robes of jade and of coral
And curious lapis-blue eyes.

She was a wistful lady . . .
When the west wind sighs
Inscrutable even as the terrible calm of Buddha
Her impassive disguise.

She was a Manchu lady . . .
Azure the skies,
And golden the tracery sealing the proud lips of Buddha
As the west wind dies.

ALCHEMY

They had no souls, the envious ones!
They were blind to your heart's beauty,
Deaf to your spirit's voice,
And dumb in the presence of your holiness.
But they felt a vague warmth
In their cold hands
As you passed.
And so they reached out
For your flaming soul;
Throwing it on their own dead altar-fires,
Warming their numb fingers in the golden flame
That rose to Heaven,
Flickered,
And went out.

Somewhere, among the scattered ashes,
Lies the matrix-stone
Of your imperishable beauty.

INVOCATION

Tonight in sleep there came to me
A dream where Christ walked on the sea;
And, shipwrecked, I called out, to hear
His quiet answer, "I am near."
But when the waves had risen high
I doubted—till I heard him cry:
"Come take my hand, beloved one—
The long and lonely night is done.
Fear not! and you shall walk with me,
As Peter walked, upon the sea."

Who was it called? The night is slow
To answer; but awake I know
The clutching terror of the heart
That feels the weed-choked waters part,
And, drowning, rears a Christ who stands
With dim-remembered outstretched hands.
Who knows if Peter's Christ is mine?
Like Peter, now, I ask a sign . . .
If Christ still walks upon the sea—

How calm is dawn on Galilee!

Florence Kilpatrick Mixter

LULLABY

Come, sleep. Her heart's a wood-anemone.
Her thoughts are swallows flown
Across the dusk. Her hair's a willow-tree
By the west wind blown.
Her eyes are pools where bubbles rise and break—
Dream-bubbles from the deep.
Her soul's a moth that flutters in their wake.
Come sleep. . . . come sleep. . . .

Florence Kilpatrick Mixter

IT VANISHED

To C. A. B.

Can it matter to you and me
Where the hurrying years have fled,
Since they told me you ceased to be,
Since the day when they called you dead?
Death? As a cobweb spun
By night on the dew-drenched grass,
It vanished . . . I saw you pass
With your face to the rising sun.

Grace Hodsdon Boutelle

THE MOUNTAIN GRAVEYARD

High on the mountain where the storm-heads are,
  Lying where all may see, there is a place
As hideous and shocking as a scar
  That mars the beauty of a well-loved face.
Infinitely drear, and raw, and nude,
It waits and listens in the solitude.

There is no friendly tree in all that square
  Of scattered stones and arid, troubled clay.
Bleak as the creed of those who journey there,
  Hard as the code by which they lived their day,
It gives them all they ask of it—its best;
No beauty and no softness—only rest.

But oh, the pity of it all is this:
  They lived with beauty and their eyes were blind.
Dreaming of far strong joys, they came to miss
  Those that were near. So at the last we find
No tenderness of blossom, but instead
Mute emblems of the longings of the dead.

These rain-bleached sea-shells in an ordered row
  Tell of an ocean that they never knew
Except in dreams which, through the ebb and flow
  Of years, set seaward as the torrents do.
Always they planned to follow, knowing deep
Within their hearts that dreams are but for sleep.

And see these tawdry bits of broken glass
  Which speak the foreign glories of the town—
The crowds, the lights; these too are dreams that pass
  Here where the hemming walls of rock look down,
And clasp their children fast within their keep
Until they cradle them at last to sleep.

Yet all the while if they could only know
  The beauty that is theirs to breathe and touch—
The whisper of the dawn across the snow,
  The vast low-drifting clouds that love them much—
Oh, they could call their dreams home down the sky,
And carry beauty with them when they die.

DuBose Heyward

INNOCENT SLEEP

My little son half woke last night—
    A golden-headed rosiness,
    Dark-eyed with drowsiness;
Peered for a moment at the candle-light.

So I have seen the daisies sleep
    Pink-tipped along a mountain wall,
    And hardly stir at all
At the bright dawn—their dreams have been so deep.

Nancy Campbell

DIRGE

To those under smoke-blackened tiles, and cavernous echoing arches,
In tortuous hid courts where the roar never ceases
Of deep cobbled streets wherein dray upon dray ever marches,
The sky is a broken lid, a litter of smashed yellow pieces.

To those under mouldering tiles, where life to an hour is crowded—
Life, to a span of the floor, to an inch of the light;
And night is all feverous hot, a time to be bawded and rowdied:
Day is a time of grinding, that looks for rest to the night.

Those who would live, do it quickly; with quick tears, sudden laughter,
Quick oaths, terse blasphemous thoughts about God the Creator.
Those who would die, do it quickly; with noose from the rafter,
Or the black, shadowy eddies of Thames, the hurry-hater.

Life is the master, the keen and grim destroyer of beauty.
Death is a quiet and deep reliever, where soul upon soul
And wizened and thwarted body on body are loosed from their duty

Richard Hughes

Of living, and sink in a bottomless, edgeless, impalpable hole.

Dead, they can see far above them, as if from the depth of a pit,
Black on the glare small figures that twist and are shrivelled in it.

Richard Hughes

TIMELESSNESS

We knew a timeless place beside three trees,
Where lights across an arching bridge were set;
And, dark against the sky, was flung a frieze
Of human joy in shifting silhouette.
Figures of children—swift, and lovers—slow,
Made us a pageant as they crossed the hill.
We called it "being dead," and watched them go,
Remembering when we were living still.
Now you have died, and found those timeless nights;
Ours was a dream which you have made come true.
Three trees are there, a hill, a bridge of lights:
I know, I know—I have been dead with you!
I shall put off my grief, my sick despair,
Since only joy is silhouetted there.

Louise Townsend Nicholl

FOLK-SONG—FROM THE DANISH

Little Rose and her mother, from the boat where it lay,
Bantered each other in the merriest way.
Ha, ha, ha, sa, sa, sa, sa!
Bantered each other in the merriest way!

"No lover shall wed me—no matter how bold—
Till trees in the garden bear blossoms of gold."
Ha, ha, ha, sa, sa, sa, sa!
"Till trees in the garden bear blossoms of gold."

From the porch thinks Hr. Peder, amused at her jest,
" 'Tis always the one who laughs latest laughs best!"
Ha, ha, ha, sa, sa, sa, sa!
" 'Tis always the one who laughs latest laughs best!"

And when later they entered the garden—behold
From each tree was hanging a ring of bright gold!
Ha, ha, ha, sa, sa, sa, sa!
From each tree was hanging a ring of bright gold!

But Rosalie, scarlet as fresh-dripping blood,
Kept both her eyes fixed on the grass where she stood.
Ha, ha, ha, sa, sa, sa, sa!
Kept both her eyes fixed on the grass where she stood.

Then Hr. Peder he kissed her, still full of the jest:
"Most surely the one who laughs latest laughs best!"
Ha, ha, ha, sa, sa, sa, sa!
"Most surely the one who laughs latest laughs best!"

Antoinette DeCoursey Patterson

LUCREZIA BORGIA'S LAST LETTER

Before me shine the words of her last letter—
  Lucrezia Borgia to the Pope at Rome—
Wherein she begs, as life's remaining fetter
  Slips from her, that his prayers will guide her home:

The favor God has shown to me confessing,
  As swift my end approaches, Father, I,
A Christian though a sinner, ask your blessing
  And kiss your feet in all humility.

The thought of death brings no regret, but pleasure;
  And after the last sacrament great peace
Will be mine own—in overflowing measure,
  If but your mercy marks my soul's release.

And here the letter finds a sudden ending,
  As though the dying hand had lost its power:
My children to Rome's love and care commending—
  Ferrara—Friday—at the fourteenth hour.

An odor as of incense faintly lingers
  About the page of saintly sophistries—
And I am thinking clever were the fingers
  That could mix poison and write words like these.

Antoinette DeCoursey Patterson

IN THE NIGHT WATCHES

INVOCATION

Kwan-yin, mother of mercies,
  Kwan-yin, goddess of prayer,
Hear my voice at thine altar,
  Heed my foot on the stair!

Lo, the rice-bowl is empty;
  Toa-tai smiles no more.
Sorrow lurks at our roof-tree,
  Ruin waits at the door.

Kwan-yin, mother of mercies,
  Kwan-yin, goddess of prayer,
Hear my voice at thine altar,
  Heed my foot on the stair!

PIERROT AND COLUMBINE

The gods are dead, and we are old;
  And we are old, for now at last,
For now at last our hearts are cold;
  Our hearts are cold, and love is past.

Our love is past, and even so,
  And even so our dreams have fled.
Our dreams have fled, and so we know,
  And so we know the gods are dead!

REQUIEM

All the love, the love we gave them;
Tears, unanswered prayers to save them!
Now, what is there left to show?—
Wooden crosses in a row!

They wore their crown of thorns so lightly,
June still blossoms just as brightly.
How can laughing roses know
Of wooden crosses in a row?

Is it, then, so sweet, their sleeping?
After all, was life worth keeping?
There they lie, and none may know—
Wooden crosses in a row.

TOWARD EVENING

The poppies just outside my door
  Still flaunt their crimson loveliness.
How can they blossom any more,
  Now I have lost my happiness?

Not any grief of mine can mar
  The beauty of this tranquil weather.
Each evening, with the first pale star,
  Comes that same thrush we loved together,

And pours gold notes from every bough
  Of his old sacred apple-tree.
But he has lost his magic now—
  He cannot sing you back to me.

Margaret DeLaughter

LOVE'S PASSING

Gold as the sun,
  Bold as a boy,
Your wanton wings waken
  The love you destroy,
Leaving within the heart of each flower
Longing for an impassioned hour.

Shade of the sea,
  Maid of the sky,
Your azure wings beat on
  My heart as you fly
Dreamily on in a happy trance,
Letting me wither with never a glance.

Rare as a pearl,
  Fair as a nun,
Your white wings inspire
  The love that you shun,

Rising from passion and glad desire
Into the sun's heart higher and higher.

Flown from the world,
  Blown like a breath,
You leave me earth-rooted
  And wedded to death,
Wasting for lips I have never known,
Hoarding my fragrance for you alone!

MY SEPULCHRE

The flame blue of heaven glows overhead,
Under my halting feet crisp leaves burn red.
Oh, what an ecstasy now to be dead!

Oh, what an ecstasy now to lie down
One with the autumn earth pulsing and brown—
So in the sunlight to slumber and drown!

To drown in a sea of gold, melt into air
Crisp with the tang of frost, pungent and rare—
Sunshine my sepulchre, wind my last prayer!

Gladys Edgerton

The Lotus

The lotus dreams that she
May root in mud,
Yet steal off with the bee.

On a Cameo

This image on a ring
Is all that lives
Of what was once a king.

Late Mourning

Plum petals fall like tears
Upon a grave
Neglected now for years.

Recognition

What seek you from the sky?
Long since
The noisy geese flew by.

The Prophetess

For years the earth has known
Impending fate
Each time the dead moon shone.

FROM THE VEDIC

The Egg

What lies hidden in the shell
Was born through torment deep in hell;

And it will burst its bonds to sense
Analogous experience,
And swing through poles of heaven and hell
To lurk again within the shell.

Ecce Homo

Behold the man indeed—the inner self
  Who sits inside, no bigger than one's thumb;
Who limbless moves, and lacking eyes can see;
  Scans all the past, can all the future plumb.

The Herdsman

I hail the wandering herdsman of the night,
  The watcher and the shepherd of the stars,
Who points the pathway leading to the light,
  And for the sheep lets down the golden bars.

The Rosary

Within the all-enfolding hands
  The worlds are being told like beads.
Lift up your eyes and look thereon!—
  What need have ye of forms and creeds?

Creation

The moon was gendered from my mind,
  And from my eye the sun had birth,
And from my breast the winds burst forth,
  And underneath my feet the earth.

Mason A. Freeman, Jr.

BEYOND SORROW

SO IT BEFELL

When the day is long
And full of pain,
I remember
A certain little lane
Where every night,
At half-past seven,
The train flashed by
On its way to heaven.

There you and I,
Watching in the lane,
Dreamed of riding
Inside the train—
Away from the wide
Sun-flowered plain
And tall fields of
High rolling grain.

When night is long
And strangely sane,
I remember
A certain little lane,
Where, on one night—
So it befell—
The train passed heaven
On its way to hell.

WITHOUT GRIEF

Beyond sorrow I have seen a pool
Of clear green waters
Without shadows,
And in it lay my body cool
And quiet as a leaf.
And I have watched it lying there
And seen the sunlight on it—
Now I come back and meet you
Without grief.

I WOULD BE FREE

I would be free of you, my body;
Free of you, too, my little soul.
I am so tired of this mocking hobby,
I am so tired of this imaged whole.

I would be neither base nor godly.
Loathing myself, could I bear then
To see all life and suffering oddly
Twisted and shaped to the needs of men?

I would be neither my own nor another's:
I would not tend for myself, nor hate
The flame of silence that in me smothers
Under the crackling smoke of fate.

God!—what is there for such as in me
Cannot be two and are not whole?
Within the spirit dwells the body,
Upon the body feeds the soul.

CRISIS

Then, being aloof,
To give myself
Was nothing to me:
Only leaves falling
On the roof
Were prophecy.

DESPAIR

If the dream goes
Does it matter?
Life remains compact,
Integrate, whole;
And the living of it
Is the same
Day by identical day—
There is nothing missing!

NOW MORE THAN EVER DIVIDED

Now more than ever divided,
Loving and yet not loving,

A worshiper of your gentleness,
Demanding my own aloofness;
Now more than ever divided,
Two of myself, two in you;
Reared as a tower of granite
Bright on the last blue hill,
Crumbled and rooted with wild-flowers
Under the touch of your hand,
Torn as a leaf from a woodvine
Colorfully tossed to the wind,
Caught with dry tendrils of yearning
Close to an ancient wall!

IN RECOMPENSE

Now for the long years when I could not love you,
I bring in recompense this gift of yearning—
A luminous vase uplifted to the sun,
Blue with the shadows of near-twilight.
Here in its full round symmetry of darkness,
Burning with swift curved flashes bright as tears,
I lift it to the lonely lips that knew
Its slow creation, and the wheel of sorrow turning.
Take it with hands like faded petals,
White as the moonlight of our garden;
And for the long years when I could not love you
Drink from its amber-colored night.

Eda Lou Walton

COMMENT

MIDSUMMER DELITE

THE poets should companion us in midsummer—poets old and new, so they be good ones. And we shall like them the better if we give way to their moods a little instead of imposing on them our own. "In this time of our despair we should turn to the poets for guidance and inspiration toward manhood, rather than sink into the degradation of utter unbelief in anything outside our small selves"—so wrote the Chicago *Post's* London correspondent not long ago. Yes, guidance and inspiration, no doubt, but why be so solemn about it? We turn to the poet for delight, and of delight even guidance and inspiration are mere corollaries.

Delight, let us remind ourselves, is no cheap or vulgar emotion. What says our faithful guide, the *Century Dictionary?* First, we are told that our modern spelling is "wrong"—we should return to the earlier *delite*, for there is no etymological reason for linking up this Old-French word with the Anglo-Saxon *light* and its extinct guttural. Delite, then (let us, for a midsummer moment, resume the old spelling) comes from the Latin *delicere*, to allure—the same root which gives us *delicate*, *delectable*, *delicious;* and the verb transitive means, we are told, "to affect with great pleasure or rapture."

I will delite myself in thy statutes,

sings the Psalmist to God himself.

Man delites not me—no, nor woman either,

cries Hamlet. And in *Macbeth* we are reminded that

The labor we delite in physics pain.

No, delite is too rare to be cheap, and too richly fine to be vulgar. Guidance and inspiration spring from under its wings, but so do gayety and all the keen little joys of sense. Are few of us heirs of delite?—Do we take our little joys and big ones merely as fact-ridden pleasures and without this finer imaginative zest? Then surely we are cheated of our share of man's universal inheritance; then surely we have a grievance against the world, whose misguiding civilization has locked us away from nature and the other high original sources of delite; then surely we must turn to the poets, the artists, the seers, and take them out with us under the sky, into the woods, the plains, the mountains—set them against the play of winds and waves, of sunshine and dark storns. Somehow we must restore the connection, regain and develop our souls' capacity for delite. It is a stark, sometimes a bitter business; it implies the stripping away of "fold on fold of flesh and fabrics and mockeries." It implies the strict sincerities of nature and of art.

Perhaps the poets would be of more assistance in this business if we could trust them more—if, as I said above, we could give way to their moods a little instead of inposing on them our own. The man in search of guidance and inspiration resents a sense of humor in a poet, criticizes a grotesque as if it were intended for a god.

The tame man resents a wild fling of free verse; the violent man resents the sonnet's rounded mold of sentiment. The average man looks for peace in art, resents its call to war; looks for his own image in a poet, and a flattering image at that. Our standardized fellow-citizens—wearing their clothes, doing their jobs, thinking their thoughts all too much alike—would standardize that incarnation of the untamable, the poet. As *The Nation* puts it:

> We do not banish poets from the Republic, but try to make them over into the image of congressmen. "Is it necessary," we ask, "to be so wild and passionate and heedless? How are we to know that the fellow is a poet and not a *poseur?*"

And the paper advises:

> Let us be content not to know. Better that ten thousand *poseurs* should have their little fling and fun than that one Shelley, or one far less than Shelley, should be wounded or restrained or silenced. Can we not be liberated from this spirit of miserable thrift? . . . Let us admit the noble madness of poets and allow for it. Our verse will be less cool and humble and diluted, and more simple, sensuous and passionate. . . . We stand in bitter need of a glow, however faint, of the Dionysian, the unsubdued. The universe, as William James finely said, is wild as a hawk's wing.

So, in our summer wanderings of body or spirit, it may be well to practice a little spiritual lavishness. Only by giving ourselves away to our poet-companions can we explore their kingdom of delite. It should be a proud companionship of the free—on equal terms of challenge and retort, of daring, unflinching sympathy. Almost any poet worthy of the name, thus treated, has much to give. *H. M.*

BRAZILIAN DANCE SONGS

It may be worth while if I set down for the readers of POETRY some of the songs which I learned on a *fazenda* twenty-seven miles from a railway in the state of Bahia, in Brazil. "White people" did not come to this place, and I think it very improbable that any Brazilian has taken the trouble to note either the words or the music of these songs, so full of atmosphere, which are known to the *vaqueiros* (Brazilian *gauchos*) and to the country people in general who dance—sometimes to the sound of a guitar, sometimes to the combined stimulus of an accordion and a bean-rattle, but again to the simply rhythmic accompaniment of the latter instrument alone, an affair made from a gourd and gaily decorated.

This dance, or *samba*, may be varied, but frequently it consists of no more than monotonous movements of the hips and an uninterrupted stamping of the feet. The men, usually heated to the proper pitch of enthusiasm by a copious indulgence in rum, move in a hesitating circle, each man with a hand on the shoulder of the dancer before him; approaching and retreating as they face the women who make a similar approach and retreat, the groups joining in the song which is half recitative. The dance sometimes constitutes a method of lightening labor; for when a hut is to be constructed the prospective owner invites a sufficient number of friends, who dig the large pit in which the mud is to be mixed for chinking the frail walls of the palm-thatched dwelling. Here, appro-

priately intoxicated by their appreciative host, the male visitors, in the dancing attitude described above, churn the mud with their feet, while the women pass to and from the nearest water supply, carrying and emptying large earthen jars, to the encouragement of the singers who stamp and sway with a hypnotic motion, an expression of mingled stupidity and exaltation upon their tan-complexioned faces. I give you a very literal translation of a song which I heard on one of these occasions. In the original there is a marked regular beat, but the singers interpret the music very freely with an unduplicatable variety of minor quavers and resultant accidentals that show the African influence dominant over the Portuguese.

I was a seven-months child.
I did not drink milk from the breast of my mother.
Yet now they send me to the stream to pound their clothes.

In my father's corral were a hundred cows
From which the milk was taken to feed me.
Yet today they send me to the stream to beat the clothes.

Ei! Take the leaves from the poisonous corana, little Bahian half-breed!

I have no heart, Yaya;
But I go to wash your clothes!

In regard to this one must recall that there is a traditional distinction in being a seven-months child, and that only mothers of the common people suckle their children. Yaya and Yoyo are feminine and masculine terms of respectful address introduced by the Negroes.

Another song begins:

In my land there are palm trees, little half breed,
Where the *sabia* sings.
Ei, lei-lei, Yaya!
Come here, my pretty little lady.

The birds in this place
Can not sing like my birds.
Ei, lei-lei, Yaya!
Come here, my little miss!

The songs one hears in more populous districts are many of them entirely Portuguese in origin, and have the Latin religious naiveté. One, known I think from one end of Brazil to the other, is called *Noiva Morta* (*The Dead Bride*), and the lines are as follows:

When I die I shall be dressed like a bride,
With my hair flowing free under my veil.
They will say to each other,
"Already she resembles one of the angels of heaven."

My dress will be woven of jealousy
And marked with cruel passion.
My wreath will be of the flowers of white longing,
And my sepulchre shall be in your heart.

A lullaby, which was often sung to my baby, says:

Hush, hush, hush!
Open the door!
Turn the lamp high—
Little Manoel Jose wants to nurse,
Little Manoel Jose wants to sleep.
He will not sleep in a bed,
But in a hammock of boughs
Under the leaves.

This little baby can not sleep in a bed
Because he is accustomed to lie between the feet of Our Lady, Saint Anna.

And another favorite of the same nurse-maid of extremely unpoetical exterior has the charmingly unconsidered verse:

I will come to you singing
In a cart filled with roses and pinks.
Our Lady will stand in the centre
And she will select for me the one of you who is most beautiful.

And again:

I saw the sea fringed with gold,
And I thought it was a cushion of blue velvet.
I saw the sea wound with streamers of white ribbon.
No—I was mistaken.
There is nothing there,
But I see white faces rising up at me out of the water.

Here is a bit which is particularly characteristic of an ingratiatingly elastic ethical consciousness:

Negress Laurencia, who gave you the lace?
It was the shopkeeper, senhora.
He is called Senhor Chico.
He is called Senhor Chico.

Lace of silk threads,
Skirt of coarse cotton!
O lady, strike me!—
Don't lock me up!
If I stole the lace
It was because I needed it very much
To make me a skirt
For the procession of my saint!

I think I can not end this reminiscence better than by

giving you the first two verses of the *Fado de Hylario.* A *fado* is properly a song of the people, and the one noted here is of Portuguese inspiration and as well known in both Portugal and Brazil as *Suwanee River* or *My Old Kentucky Home* among us:

Go away ashamed, moon!—]
Get out of the heavens!
The eyes of my beloved
Are far brighter than yours!

Our Lady is knitting a pair of stockings
With yarn made of light.
The points of Her needles are the stars,
And the stockings are for the baby Jesus.

The above translations are from memory, and in spite of the defect of ignoring the rhythm will, I think, give some idea of the temperamental qualities of the Brazilian people. *Evelyn Scott*

ABORIGINAL TASMANIAN POETRY

The extinct Tasmanians are interesting in that they were the most primitive race that we have any knowledge of. They wore no clothes, and their only shelters were a few pieces of bark propped up for a break-wind; yet they decked themselves with shell-necklets and had quite elaborate poetry. Does not this prove that art, if it does not come before utility, at least comes directly after food, before clothes and shelter? In singing their songs two or three would take up the burden, always at intervals of a

third. Some listeners have likened them to the songs of the Arabs; one (I don't know whether he was a Scotchman) compared them to the bagpipes. Around their fire at night they sang of the doings of the day, and very often some striking scene would be enacted. If the acted scene was a success, a corollary was born which passed on from tribe to tribe all over the island.

Their language, full of vowel sounds and liquid consonants, was almost as musical as Italian. Here is a song sung by the women, with a rough translation following it:

Nikkeh ningeh tribneh nickeh mollyga pollyla.
Namu rykemmeh treganna mabeh thinninneh treganna
Nehnane, kehgreuna, nynaby thinneh, tringeh gugerra tyathinneh,
Nynabythinneh koobryneh, mareh terrennet.
Pypatehinneh pungtinneh, loocoothinneh.

The women hunt the kangaroo and wallaby.
The emu runs in the bush, the kangaroo runs in the bush.
The young emu, the wallaby, the joey-kangaroo, the bandicoot, the kangaroo-rat,
The little kangaroo-rat and the little opossum, the ring-tail opossum, etc.

And so on, enumerating all the animals that are hunted. There were endless repetitions, some lines being repeated two or three times. Time was kept by beating sticks together and beating with the hands on skins rolled up tight to form a drum.

A narrative called *The Legend of Fire* is the only fraction of their mythology which has been preserved. The two stars Castor and Pollox are associated with its heroes' adventures. *H. W. Stewart*

REVIEWS

ROBINSON'S DOUBLE HARVEST

The Three Taverns, and *Avon's Harvest*, by Edwin Arlington Robinson. Macmillan Co.

It is a relief to some of Mr. Robinson's admirers to find him once more in the U. S. A. instead of in Camelot; for, to tell the truth, he is much more at home here, and the figures he presents are much more convincing. Although there are in *The Three Taverns* certain studies of historic or legendary characters—Hamilton and Burr, Rahel Robert, John Brown, Paul of Tarsus, Lazarus—both books are mainly in this poet's most characteristic vein, mainly studies of his gnarled and weather-beaten neighbors; of incomplete, unrounded characters in tragically ill-fitting human relationships.

Of these monologue or dialogue narratives *Avon's Harvest*, the longest, is perhaps the most distinguished. With true New England frugality, it weaves a closely knit, formidable tragedy out of meagre materials—a college antagonism, a blow, a long worm-eating revenge; and its creeping emotion of horror is all the more powerful, perhaps, because of the poet's restraint. Probably a psychoanalyst would diagnose Avon's case as insanity—delusions induced by fear of the serpentine, ruthless being whose offensive love had changed into consuming hatred. But such a gradual burrowing insanity was never more sharply and powerfully presented. The thing is done with a kind

of cold thrift, as effective in its way as Poe's lush and shadowed eloquence; the music in the one case being slow and stern, and in the other rich and full of sombre color. *Avon* has a tonal, almost monotonous beauty:

> You need not ask
> What undulating reptile he was like,
> For such a worm as I discerned in him
> Was never yet on earth or in the ocean
> Or anywhere else than in my sense of him.

Again:

> And having had one mordacious glimpse of him
> That filled my eyes and was to fill my life,
> I have known Peace only as one more word
> Among the many others we say over
> That have an airy credit of no meaning.

Last year's book, *The Three Taverns*, is mostly also dramatic narratives. I confess that certain ones interest me intellectually but bring little emotional thrill. The Hamilton-Burr dialogue, the monologues by Saint Paul and Rahel Robert and John Brown, are searching essays in character analysis, but they leave one cold. There is more of John Brown's flaming personality in a few lines of Lindsay's poem—

> And there he sits
> To judge the world;
> His hunting ogs
> At his feet are curled—

than in these pages of farewell to his wife and the world, fine as many passages are:

Could I have known, I say, before I left you
That summer morning, all there was to know—
Even unto the last consuming word
That would have blasted every mortal answer
As lightning would annihilate a leaf,
I might have trembled on that summer morning;
I might have wavered; and I might have failed.

The best line in the poem is fortunately the last:

I shall have more to say when I am dead.

There is no lack of fire in *London Bridge*, a case of ill-assorted marriage in which the pair hurl swathed rocks of hatred at each other—these two are terribly alive. Also, in a marriage-case less violent but more perplexing, one is deeply moved by Nimmo of the "velvet eyes",

At his bewildered and unfruitful task
Of being what he was born to be—a man.

And one "gets" completely "the inextinguishable grace" of the vagabond in *Peace on Earth*, and the nothingness of Taskar Norcross,

a dusty worm so dry
That even the early bird would shake his head
And fly on farther for another breakfast.

But it is in Mr. Robinson's meditative poems that one tastes most keenly the sharp and bitter savor of his high aloof philosophy. He is not for Demos:

Having all,
See not the great among you for the small,
But hear their silence; for the few shall save

The many, or the many are to fall—
Still to be wrangling in a noisy grave.

He offers no solution of the problem of creation, either in general or in detail, but he presents it in vivid lines:

There were seekers after darkness in the Valley of the Shadow,
And they alone were there to find what they were looking for.

He insists—

That earth has not a school where we may go
For wisdom, or for more than we may know.

But meantime,

Say what you feel, while you have time to say it—
Eternity will answer for itself.

H. M.

THE POET OF THE WAR

Poems, by Wilfred Owen; with an introduction by Siegfried Sassoon. B. W. Huebsch.

English critics have been giving high praise to Wilfred Owen's poems. Now that he has achieved an American edition, we are enabled to ratify their choice of him as the most distinguished poet of the War, and join in their sorrow over his early death as one of its heaviest losses.

Personally I find his work very fine indeed. I don't think the much-discussed *Strange Meeting* stands out far, if any, above the others—*Apologia Pro Poemate Meo*, or *The Show*, for instance; or the three lyrics, *Greater Love*, *Arms and the Boy*, *Anthem for Doomed Youth*. The experi-

ment with assonance in *Strange Meeting* arouses interest, but this is not the only poem by any means in which he uses alliterative assonance skilfully, although here the scheme is more definite and obvious.

Certainly there is nothing cheap about Wilfred Owen, and if he was making propaganda against war in his verse, as he might very justly, he was consciously making poetry also; which is what some of the other war-poets forgot or failed to do. In one or two of the poems in the latter part of the book one comes upon the vein made popular by Siegfried Sassoon and Gibson and others—the sort of "bloomin' " character-sketch or satiric incident, as in *Chances* or *S. I. W.*, in which someone wrote the mother of the soldier who had kissed the muzzle of his gun and shot himself, "Tim died smiling." But these are below the level of Wilfred Owen's other poems, although certainly not below this type of poem by Sassoon or Gibson.

The trouble with these poems, if one considers them as propaganda, is that they do not propagandize! They have a piquant flair for the easy-chair reader—quite as much as that first emotional reaction to war which was Rupert Brooke's. For the fact is, they represent war as adventure; and on the page it matters not whether a man is killed in a trench or in a gun-fight in Arizona—the zest for the reader is the same. And the result, so far as propaganda against war is concerned, is quite the opposite of the effect intended.

But when it comes to the slow horror of such a poem as *The Show*, or the subtle satire of *Arms and the Boy*, or the pitiful hopelessness of *Strange Meeting*, there you have the deep personal experience and revelation which is the only sort of propaganda (and one might say of poetry) that counts. These poems are indeed at the opposite pole from Rupert Brooke's gesture of sacrifice and renunciation. And yet the sacrifice is made no less, with a marvelously cool restraint and clear perception. This is what makes *Greater Love* such a fine poem—fine also in sheer poetic quality; with a certain seventeenth-century perfection, like George Herbert or Donne.

To go back for a moment to the sort of satiric graphic sketches noted above, what I mean about these is what Wilfred Owen meant:

> Nevertheless, except you share
> With them in hell the sorrowful dark of hell,
> Whose mould is but the trembling of a flare,
> And Heaven but as the highway for a shell,
>
> You shall not hear their mirth;
> You shall not come to think them well content,
> By any jest of mine. These men are worth
> Your tears: you are not worth their merriment.

Neither are we, I have sometimes thought, worth their stark tragedies, or these trench paradoxes which furnish incidents for the poetic cinema, so to speak—so that poets also may become war profiteers! It is this that I have resented in many of the war-poems which, like the war to end war, were supposed to rid war of its glamour. The

best of Owen's poems are far indeed from this; and that is their virtue.

Wilfred Owen evidently belonged to a later generation than Rupert Brooke, in spite of the few years between them; this not only in respect to his attitude about war, in which change Brooke would undoubtedly have shared had he lived, but in respect to his verse as well. It is nervous, sinewy, closely packed. His is a hardness and a precision that—could it have been preserved past the Sambre Canal, where he fell only a few days before the Armistice—would certainly have achieved much. He could not, one feels sure, have degenerated into any "Georgian" looseness of thought or structure. There is too much aloofness in his poems for that, and too much clear vision. *A. C. H.*

MR. MASEFIELD'S RACER

Right Royal, by John Masefield. Macmillan Co.

The poem *Right Royal*, by John Masefield, is undoubtedly a splendid realistic description of a steeplechase; written, I should judge, by one who has never ridden over a course, but who, being a good horseman, has painstakingly covered every point in the race. Particularly good is his description of the London betting commissioner's representative who visits the racing stables, and his picture of the race crowds on their way vividly recalls Charles Lever's description of those making their annual pilgrimage to the Punchestown steeplechases.

But whether Right Royal could really have won this race, as he does in Mr. Masefield's poem, is another matter.

After the most grueling race, of some four miles, to which a horse can be subjected, it seems unreasonable to suppose this super-horse capable, in a run of four furlongs on the flat, of making up thirty lengths lost by his mishap at the jump known as Lost Lady.

Let me make this quite clear: Compton Course, on which the race was run, was four-and-a-quarter miles in length. The first time around the course Right Royal lost thirty lengths at the hurdle and ditch. Eighteen lengths he seems to have made up by the time he came to his Lost Lady jump on the second time around the course. This of course took a great deal out of the horse.

Now, at the average speed at which steeplechases of this distance are run, the horses were covering approximately forty-eight feet a second—about four and a half lengths. Right Royal, in pecking at the Lost Lady jump, thereby coming almost to a standstill, recovering himself and again getting into his stride, must have lost some four seconds, or eighteen lengths. As he was twelve lengths behind when taking the jump, he had thirty lengths to recover before overtaking his field, in half a mile. This is obviously impossible.

Conceding a steeplechase to be the chanciest of races, the poem nevertheless seems to convey the impression that the rider of Right Royal rather expected all the other

horses to meet with mishaps, thereby enabling his mount to win. A number of stanzas, being entirely irrelevant, should have been omitted: for a four-mile effort it carries too much hay. But the poem as a whole is delightful, and takes every lover of a thoroughbred well over the jumps with him and holds the interest from post to finish.

N. Howard Thorp

NOTE. Because of the controversy as to whether Mr. Masefield's hero is a real horse or a super-steed of the poet's invention, the editor submitted the book to a cowboy poet whose horsemanship is as famous throughout the West as his poetry.

SONGS AND SPLASHES

Morning, Noon and Night, by Glenn Ward Dresbach. Four Seas Co.

One may find a few fine lyrics in this book, as in the two earlier ones which this poet has put out—songs simple almost to obviousness, but deftly and musically turned. Such are three or four in the *Burro Mountains* and *Apple-blossoms* groups which open the volume, numbers three and four of the *Fruit-growing* group, the longer poem *To One Beloved*, and the first of the *Songs after the War*. These, all but the last, our readers have seen; here is a shapely new one, with a wistful ending.

I heard a thrush when twilight came
  Sing of the woes it had not known—
Of hearts that burned in rainbow flame,
  Of barren fields where seeds were sown.

And then it sang of happy trees
  Where fruit is golden in the sun,
Of raptures and of mysteries
  Through which the songs of seasons run.

And I was sadder for the song
  Of rapture than the song of pain—
For one lost gladness, gone so long,
  Came back and could not hurt again!

Of the longer poems *The Nest of the Bluebird* has a softly flowing dreaminess, the dreamer recalling the many human lives of his wandering soul. If only there were more magic in its tunefulness, more invention in its phrasing and epithets, more white alchemic fire in its motive power—the creative zest behind it—we should have a memorable poem, somewhat in the mood of Tennyson's *Lotus-eaters* but bearing a different spiritual inference.

Sometimes one is more irritated; sometimes it seems absurd that a poet who has studiously trained himself should do the obvious or banal thing with such an innocent air. Certain of the narrative poems are too cheaply journalistic, one would think—*The Colonel's Lady*, for example—to be allowed typewriter privileges, not to speak of printer's ink. And how can an accredited poet commit such a crime as the second of these two lines:

I cannot dine with you today
  And hear how all your wealth does good—

or close a war-song with such a meagre rhyme-compromise as

But, Lord of Nations, tell us
  That Wars no more remain.

A few of the songs remind us that the poet has lived in New Mexico and Panama, but the impress of the wilderness, of strange places, is not very strong on a temperament perhaps too hospitable to the lighter and more facile emotions. *H. M.*

MODERN AND ELIZABETHAN

The Poet in the Desert, by Charles Erskine Scott Wood. (New revised ed.) Privately printed, Portland, Ore.

Maia—a Sonnet Sequence, by Charles Erskine Scott Wood, with two sonnets by Sara Bard Field. Portland, Ore.

Some years ago—in September, 1915—POETRY reviewed the first of these two books, then just published. Let us reaffirm the opinion then expressed, which referred especially to the *Prologue*, now the poem's first section:

> Mr. Wood proves himself a poet not only by the sweep and power of his vision, but by the rich imagery and rhythmic beauty of his free verse at its best. His special distinction is that he really "enters into the desert," that his poetry really presents something of the color and glory, the desolation and tragedy, of this western wonderland.

The new edition of the poem is almost a re-writing of much of it; and for the better, as it is relieved of a good deal of social and political propaganda.

It may be difficult to judge impartially *Maia*, coming as it does in all the luxury of Gothic type on hand-made large-paper, with decorative illustrations singularly personal (at least the frontispiece is confessedly by the author), and of a beauty a bit amateurish perhaps, but delicate and rare. But one may safely record astonish-

ment that the same man should achieve, when well along in the dangerous middle years of life, these two poems of different moods and modes—the challenging radical modernism of the one, and the old-world freshness and acceptance-of-joy of the other.

It goes without saying that Mr. Wood is a more arresting poet in the western desert than in the Elizabethan garden. The sonnets are, perhaps inevitably, imitative of Sidney or Spenser; while *The Poet in the Desert* is the intensely personal work of a modern observer and thinker, an impassioned challenge to civilization, containing passages of beauty and power. *H. M.*

CLASSICS IN ENGLISH

Sappho, by Henry Thornton Wharton. Brentano's.
The Golden Treasury of the Greeks, by Alexander Lothian. Basil Blackwell, Oxford, England.
Medallions in Clay, by Richard Aldington. Alfred A. Knopf.
The Poets' Translation Series: Second Set. The Egoist.

Translators put one under no obligation to consider their work in relation to original texts not included in their books. I shall assume no familiarity with the classic works involved, but shall consider these books principally as English poems upon foreign and antique subjects.

Wharton is the standard Sappho. This new edition outdoes the former, containing useful literal translations,

a useless and elaborate "life," metrical versions from various hands, and disastrous attempts at paraphrasis by Miss Anne Bunner. He is not content with a single notion of the shifty poet-pedagogue; he must have them all—an encyclopedia of Sapphos.

Mr. Lothian, who has "rendered" the Greek *Anthology*, has worked hard. His neat rhymed verse is no more Greek, or at least no less English, than Herrick; the comparison which he invites could not be fair to him. At his worst he contrives an embarrassed jig-rhythm. At his best there are elegant stanzas like this:

> Yet there, your nightingales as clear
> Sing as they sang of old.
> The clutch of death is wide; but here
> Is what he cannot hold.

Medallions in Clay contains the translations from Anyte, Meleager, the Anacreontea, and the Latin poets of the Renaissance which Mr. Aldington prepared for the *Poets' Translation Series* published some time ago in England. A writer dealing with a past age must decide whether frankly to outfit it in historical trappings, "costume," etc.; or to transpose it into the idiom of his race and day, which produces an effect consistent if bizarre (see Synge's Villon and Petrarch). Mr. Aldington has done neither the one nor the other.

All traces of period have disappeared. He might have preserved the aroma of these verses more successfully if he had kept the original line-divisions, leaving the

words more or less in their original order. This would not of course indicate the original tune, but it might create another; as in Miss Densmore's Chippewa translations, or Arthur Waley's *Uta*. Such rhythms are at least jagged, and clash upon the ear; whereas the sort of cadence Mr. Aldington writes lulls the mind to sleep. Contemporary poetic prose seems to be a variety of metrical molasses.

Mr. Aldington, however, is earnest and scholarly, his translations are infinitely to be preferred to the hackwork of professors, and they doubtless contribute much to the general culture of Anglo-Saxons. To do so may have been the aim of the various imagists whose zeal and study carried out the scheme.

Except H. D., they share his shortcomings, as well as some of his excellences. They all have reverent and bland dispositions toward the holy classics, they seem to have worked in a cloud of "sweetness and light." But I feel an absence of outline, clear light, sensuous precision, and a corresponding tendency to the sweet and discreetly sentimental. This is true of Mr. Storer's translations of Sappho, Poseidippus, and Asklepiades; and it may be said also of the work of Mr. Flint and Mr. Whitall in the *First Set*.

The Pound-Fenollosa Chinese had faces, manners, garments, dreams, tangibles. Most of these Greeks and Romans have none. The archaic energy which must have animated their exploits, military or imaginative, is

nowhere to be found. No race of men ever subsisted on sweet rhetorical distinction. This absence of vitality is an effect of diction, of sound, of rhythm; as in this, from one of Mr. Aldington's Anacreontea:

> I would drink, stretched upon delicate myrtle boughs and lotus grass. And Love, with his robe fastened about his throat with papyrus, should serve me wine.

The solitary exception, naturally enough, is the work of H. D. She writes English as hard as Anglo-Saxon, and cultivates no continental suavities. She has had the discretion to select for her contribution Euripides—*Choruses from the Iphigenia in Aulis and the Hippolytus*, which remained impassioned even in the swathings of Professor Murray's Swinburnian verse.

T. S. Eliot, in reviewing the *First Set* in POETRY some years ago, noted that in avoiding such an English cliché as "Achilles ran like the wind," her version, "Achilles had strapped the wind about his ankles," is contrary to Euripides. I agree with H. D., who seems to feel that a modern poet need not reproduce with exactness phrases redundant or over-familiar. She explains thus in a note in the *Egoist* (vol. II, No. II):

> While the sense of the Greek has been strictly kept, it is necessary to point out that the repetition of useless, ornamental adjectives . . . is a heavy strain on the translator's ingenuity . . . the Homeric epithet degenerates into what the French call a *remplissage*—an expression to fill up a line. Such phrases have been paraphased or omitted.

Even Greek rhetoric evidently had its false notes.

What if these warriors and women of hers are not Greek? The Greeks are dead. We cannot put the mask beside the face to measure it. It is enough if the mask moves and speaks. He who knows no Greek has the right to say: I will call these Greek; for they are surely men and women, they have substance, they move with passion.

> They will lift their shields,
> Riveted with brass,
> As they enter Simois
> In their painted ships.

Phaedra cries out on her sick-bed:

> Take me to the mountains!
> Oh for woods, pine tracts,
> Where hounds athirst for death
> Leap on the bright stags!
> God, how I would shout to the beasts
> With my gold hair torn loose!

The individual talent cannot develop richly without an historic sense. One need not know all periods of the past, but some consciousness of Time's moods one must have—one must feel Time strangely garbed, with unfamiliar talk or metric. H. D.'s Greeks, at least for the moment, are my Greeks. It does not matter whether they, any more than Shakespeare's Romans from Plutarch, correspond with the latest or best findings of scientific historians. They live, are entities in the mind, with alien behavior and curious looks; and in the contemplation of them the poet may truly see himself in his own time.

Glenway Wescott

OUR CONTEMPORARIES

THE DIAL'S ANNUAL AWARD

Our much esteemed contemporary *The Dial* is setting a new pace for literary prizes by offering an annual two-thousand-dollar purse to some one of its contributors. This is, we believe, the largest literary award ever made in this country—may it be a hint to others capable of being moved by a generous sense of justice!

POETRY, from its first number, has been urging prizes and scholarships for poets, believing such awards to be as rightfully due in this art as in painting, sculpture or music. But we have not yet made much headway. Meantime count the scholarships in art schools! In this year's graduating exercises at the Chicago Art Institute art school, one young girl sculptor received a thousand-dollar scholarship, and another an award half as large, for the two best designs on the subject *Harvest*—fifteen hundred dollars handed out as a matter of course, just like that, for a couple of nice little academic bas-reliefs (I saw them), not to be compared for a moment with many poems we have printed by gifted but impecunious boys and girls who scarcely know where their next meal is coming from! Why are new scholarships and prizes founded every year in art exhibitions and schools, while it remains impossible to convince our men and women of wealth, however liberally disposed they may be, that the poets have much more need of such awards, and at

present more right to them? How shall we wake people up to the bitter injustice of the poet's meagre earnings, to the lack of all financial recognition of his service?

The Dial is doing well to make a generous move in the right direction.

NEW MAGAZINES

New organs of this art are appearing so rapidly that it is difficult to keep track of them. *The Measure* is now nearly half a year old, with Padraic Colum and Carolyn Hall as its editors for the summer quarter. *Tempo*, published at Danvers, Mass., with Oliver Jenkins as editor and R. Ellsworth Larsson as associate, appeared in June. And *Voices—A Journal of Verse*, is to begin next autumn as a quarterly, with Harold Vinal as editor and Fiswoode Tarleton as associate; issuing from Steinert Hall, Boston.

Besides these along the Atlantic, we welcome also *The Lyric West—A Magazine of Verse*, which began in April at Los Angeles, under the editorship of Grace Atherton Dennen, 1139 West Twenty-seventh Street. It is "designed to foster the poetic development of the expanding West, though it will be an open market for the work of all verse writers of all places."

Mr. Vinal may not be aware that there is an English *Voices*—an interesting magazine of progressive modern spirit, devoted chiefly to poetry but including some imaginative prose, a few drawings and a section of reviews and notes. In the latest *Summer Number*, which

is No. III of Vol. V, we find poems by certain of our own friends—John Gould Fletcher, Louis Golding, Isaac Rosenberg—as well as an article on Rosenberg by Samuel Roth, formerly editor of *The Lyric*, who is now in England. The editor of *Voices* is Thomas Moult, whose poem of last summer, *Here for a Time*, our readers will remember; and the publishers are Chapman & Hall, Ltd.

The use of a title already pre-empted by another magazine, however far away, is of course unfortunate. POETRY is nearly nine years old, but we received recently a copy of a monthly published by Cornish Bros., Ltd., in Birmingham, England, under the title *Poetry;* with the sub-title *A Magazine of Verse, Comment and Criticism.* Somewhat intrigued, we inquired of the editor, Mr. S. Fowler Wright, whether he was ignorant of POETRY's existence when he adopted the same title. Mr. Wright promised to pass the query on to his predecessor, the founder, but we have never received an answer. As POETRY is fairly well known in England, the duplication of titles is hardly to the advantage of either magazine.

NOTES

Mr. Charles R. Murphy, a Philadelphian and a graduate of Harvard, has contributed to various magazines, and published, through John Lane Co., translations of Verhaeren.

Florence Kilpatrick Mixter (Mrs. Geo. W. M.), who has recently removed to Buffalo from Moline, Ill., will soon publish, through Boni & Liveright, her first book of verse.

Antoinette DeCoursey Patterson (Mrs. T. de Hoge P.), of Philadelphia,

is the author of three books of verse, the latest being *The Son of Merope and Other Poems* (H. W. Fisher & Co.).

Nancy Campbell (Mrs. Joseph C.) of Wicklow, Ireland, is the author of *Agnus Dei* (Four Seas Co.).

Miss Eda Lou Walton, a native of New Mexico, was one of Witter Bynner's class in poetry at Berkeley three years ago. More recently she has been living in New York.

Mr. DuBose Heyward, of Charleston, is one of the founders and officers of the Poetry Society of South Carolina.

Louise Townsend Nicholl (Mrs. Marshall Don Bewick) is on the staff of the New York *Evening Post.*

Of the poets who have not hitherto appeared in POETRY:

Mr. David Osborne Hamilton, of New York, is the author of *Four Gardens*, published last year in the *Yale Series of Younger Poets.*

Mr. Richard Hughes, of Talsarnau, North Wales, is a student at Oxford, and a contributor of verse and prose to the *Athenaeum*, *Manchester Guardian*, and other papers. Our readers will remember his recent article on *The Winter's Publishing in England.*

Miss Gladys Edgerton, of New York, has contributed to magazines, and translated certain French authors.

Mr. Mason A. Freeman, Jr. "manufactures vinegar in Huntington, W. Va." He is a member of the N. Y. Society of Independent Artists.

Miss Margaret DeLaughter is a very young poet of St. Louis, Mo.

Margaret Belle Houston (Mrs. M. L. Kauffman), who lives in Bristol, Va., has written for various magazines.

Miss Grace Hodsdon Boutelle lives in Minneapolis. Her poem is in honor of her father, for many years a congressman from Maine.

Manuscripts submitted to POETRY *in mid-summer are subject to long delay.*

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

There and Here, by Allen Tucker. Duffield & Co.

The Marble House and Other Poems, by Ellen M. H. Gates. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

The Hills of Arcetri, by Leolyn Louise Everett. John Lane Co.

Lincoln Life Sketches in Verse and Prose, by Garrett Newkirk. Duffield & Co.

Vol. XVIII No. VI

Poetry

A Magazine of Verse

Edited by Harriet Monroe

September 1921

Poems by Paul Fort
Tr'd by John Strong Newberry
Spinners
By Marya Zaturensky
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Charles the Twelfth, by Rilke
Tr'd by Jessie Lemont

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A Magazine of Verse

VOL. XVIII
NO. VI

SEPTEMBER 1921

POEMS BY PAUL FORT

LOUIS ELEVENTH, CURIOUS MAN

LOUIS ELEVENTH, for trifles fain, I love you, curious man. Dear chafferer in chestnuts, discreetly did you plan to pluck the chestnuts of fair Burgundy! You seemed all friendliness and courtesy. Your hood was hung with images of lead and copper medals. Watchers would have said your pious thoughts were fixed on things above. Sudden you stooped, your long arms outward drove. Gently, not even ruffling your sleek glove, you filched a chestnut, another, half a dozen, beneath the menacing gauntlet of your cousin.

But if by chance he let his great fists fall upon your back, your scrawny back, you roared with laughter and his stolen goods restored. 'Twas but an empty shell.

Void were the chestnuts all. Your gentle industry served your fortunes well.

So I, good singer, sage of little worth, pilfer both heaven and earth, provinces of my brain, under the hands of the Lord, all light. I deftly pull from His fingers the roses of the dawn, the rings of the storm, the lilies of starry nights, and gain little ineffable images, a heap of shining things stored up beneath my skull.

To filch by slow degrees but sure, sweet Louis Eleventh, O man most rare! May God, good politician, O rare among the Louis, have you in His good care; and as, in days of old, when you were pleased, your favorite greyhound stretched beneath your breeches, mildly to judge by that grateful warmth appeased, beneath his golden slippers in Paradise may you be, blest little king at rest, his most fervent counsellor.

And, for having praised you, counter to my teachers, and with all candor having kept your law, when the day of my doom is at hand, when I, in my turn, shall stand awaiting judgment at the bar above, pluck at God's robe that he place me in His love.

THE MIRACULOUS CATCH

The tidings seemed so Heaven-sent—an uncle dead so apropos—my dear little Louis Eleventh was fain to prop-

erly express his glee and gain additional content with a modest fête; but intimately, in pleasant society.

Master Tristan, all imagination, counseled a picnic in the plain, and as he blinked with his sly red eyes, "I consent," said the king. " 'Tis good advice. You're an old villain, though, just the same."

Next day, 'neath skies of celestial blue, gay and content, my sweet little king, Louis Eleventh, with Tristan L'Ermite and their fair, frail friends, Simonne of the Chains and Perrette of the Treasure, together came to fish for the gudgeon that swim in the Seine, at the reedy foot of the tower of Nesle.

Master Oliver, still a virgin, stands sentry near the river's margin. He strides along his tedious beat, crushing the grass with careless feet. Agape in boredom's black abyss, no consolation can he find. The fall of Buridan it is that occupies his mind.

Simonne of the Chains, soul and heart fast bound to the heart and soul of her well-loved king, like a dainty water-lily bent above an ancient nenuphar, on her lover's threadbare shoulder leant her bosom's snows, her brow of milk, her little nose of swan-white silk; and, now and then, the gracious king, Louis of France, with a tender look, would bid his lovely handmaid bring a squirming maggot to bait his hook. Then 'twas with such a melting charm that into a small green box she poured one.

'twas with such a sweet and profound appeal that she gave the creature, all quivering, to that reclining king, her adored one, that Louis the impulse no more restrains, but kisses an ear (not the ear of the maggot but that of Simonne of the Chains) amorously whispering into its hollow meekly bent, "You shall be present when I call the Three Estates to Parliament."

Perrette of the Treasure (formerly King Louis' light-o'-love, your pardon!—now bequeathed, a charming guerdon, to Tristan by royal clemency) was plump and fresh as a rambler rose, cheeks like a peach, ample bosom bare, where in duplicate glows the rising sun, each breast an orb but a pointed one, starred with grains of beauty ambulant (fleas I would say), whereon the gaunt Tristan from underneath his hood full often lets his glances brood. And when good Tristan, his line drawn taut, a fresher maggot would fain acquire, 'twas with a manner so languor-fraught the plump dame granted this slight desire, that, quite transported with Cupid's blisses, he dropped his line her side to gain! The line, released, went flic, flac, floc, and sank beneath the Seine, while Perrette received on her neck, all warm, two or three hearty headsman's kisses.

Master Oliver, still a virgin, stands sentry near the river's margin. He strides along his tedious beat, crushing the grass with careless feet. Agape in boredom's

black abyss, no consolation can he find. The fall of Buridan it is that occupies his mind.

He saw with inattentive eyes, like a flower beside the river's brim, a certain Master Villon skim the reeds in chase of dragonflies. From eyes ablaze with anarchy a side-long glance he sometimes sends towards the place where those boon-companions ply the angler's art with their gentle friends. Master Oliver, still a virgin, having other fish to fry, that advent scarcely heeds. Vaguely he saw Master Villon disrobe among the reeds, but merely murmured in slumbrous tone, like one who speaks in dreams, "That naked gentleman is not unknown to me, it seems."

And Tristan L'Ermite landed naught. And Louis Eleventh landed naught. The maggots spun in vain, in vain. And Master François Villon, now swimming in mid-Seine, as he floated whispered to his brother fish: "Liberty forever! Don't let yourselves be caught!"

"Gossip," said Tristan, "if you are good, and sage withal, I here engage to give you a pass, wherewith to break the cordon of the Scottish guard when I hang and when I decapitate." Quoth Perrette of the Treasure, "A neat reward." "And," continued Tristan in merry vein, "if your heart does not bid you the fatal view shun, some fine spring morning you shall see the rapid and joyous execution of the virgin Oliver le Dain." "I'll be there,

I'll be there," responded Perrette, clapping her hands with glee.

"Peace!" cried the king, "or this turbot I miss."

"A turbot, seigneur, is a fish of the sea," timidly ventured the tender Simonne. "With my mother I've sold full many a one in the market-place of Saint-Honoré in the time of my virginity." "A fish of the sea, eh? Then that was why I missed him!" The monarch made reply, not disconcerted in the least!

"Days that are o'er will return no more," hummed Perrette, on her hose intent. "Yes, youth has only a single time," Tristan intoned in hearty assent. Thereat the timid, the tender Simonne cooed to an air that is little known, "Twas twenty years ago my mother died." It needed only that—Tristan dissolved in tears. While the king, as he fished the wind, chanted stentorianly, "No, no, my friends, I do not wish a thing of naught to be."

And Tristan L'Ermite landed naught. And Louis Eleventh landed naught. In vain the tempting maggot spins. The esthetic gudgeons loud applaud, clapping their frantic fins. Applaud, no doubt, is figurative, but who knows what fantastic dream is truth—in the depths, where fishes live at the bottom of the stream?

At the reedy foot of the tower of Nesle, those cronies good, headsman and king, in chorus sing like birds of the

wood. And about their floats the little fish waltz as sweetly as heart could wish.

Master Oliver, still a virgin, stands sentry near the river's margin.

Then suddenly Perrette smothered a laugh in her skirt. My sweet little Louis Eleventh, feeling his line drawn taut and heaving it up with ardor, a king-fisher had caught. "A wager," Tristan said. Simonne, "A winged gudgeon," cried. And Master Oliver halted dead in the middle of his stride.

"On my word, the judgment was too empiric," mused Villon, swimming beneath the stream. "To fish for a gudgeon and catch a bird . . . in the bourgeois soul of that curmudgeon mean somewhere survives the germ of a lyric!"

And about their floats the little fish waltzed as sweetly as heart could wish.

THE LAMENT OF THE SOLDIERS

When they were come back from the wars, their heads were seamed with bleeding scars;

Their hearts betwixt clenched teeth they gripped, in rivulets their blood had dripped.

When they were come back from the wars—the blue, the red, the sons of Mars—

They sought their snuff-boxes so fine, their chests, their sheets all spotless showing;
They sought their kine, their grunting swine, their wives and sweethearts at their sewing,
Their roguish children, like as not crowned with a shining copper pot:
They even sought their homes, poor souls . . . they only found the worms and moles.

The carrion raven clamored o'er them. They spat their broken hearts before them!

THE RETURN

Ivy has covered all the wall. How many hours, how many tears, since last we loved? How many years?

No roses now. Ivy has crushed the vine. Soul, whither didst thou go? Climbing across the nests of nightingales, ivy has stifled the whole chateau.

Wind, the deep wells are choked with the roses of yesterday. Is that your hiding-place, O my dead wife?

No one replies? Who would reply? Is it not best to listen to the wind that sighs through the grasses, "my sweet love"?

Flush with the roof, the ancient, crimson sun is cut through the midst so mournfully.

Shall I bid the gardener come? The gardener? No. It would be better to summon Death to reap the long grass:

So many memories and so much love, and the setting sun at the level of the earth.

THE LITTLE SILENT STREET

The stormy silence stirs and hums. Will there be none that this way comes?

Cobblestones count geraniums. Geraniums count the cobblestones.

Dream, young girl, at your casement high. Shelled green peas before you lie.

They plump the apron white you try with rosy finger-tips to tie.

I pass, in black from head to feet. Is it forked lightning troubles thee,

Young maiden, or the sight of me? The peas have fallen in the street.

Sombre I pass. Behind I see cobblestones count each fallen pea.

The stormy silence stirs and hums. Will there be none that this way comes?

ETERNITY

One does not need to credit death. The human heart to rest is fain. O'er sleeping fields the evening's breath dreams, and I hear eternity chime in the bending ears of grain.

"Hark!—an angelus dies in heaven's blue height." Be comforted. Hours pass away. Hushed is the belfry? God doth wake. The nightingale salutes the day hid in the turret's rose-tree brake, and in its turn will mourn the night.

"Hark!—once again the hour doth swell." But the bell's already fast asleep. Eternity is chiming deep, borne by the sweet, tormented breath of zephyr and of Philomel.

One does not need to credit death.

Translated from the French of Paul Fort
by John Strong Newberry

STILL-HUNT

OMINOUS CONCORD

As if I were Jeanne d'Arc,
But wearier, I prepare
Answer and return
To the prophetic air;

My voice answering
Voices of the unearthly nation
With autumnal melody
Of my own creation:

Melody of alarm lest my
So long-imagined love retreat
Into despair as sharp and fine
As the print of sea-gull's feet.

They sing, stilling my response
With silvery indifference;
And what they mean or know
Is, like the falling of first snow,
An indecipherable cadence.

WITHOUT SLEEP

He earns the oblivion of book and shelf
Who will have for muse a Beatrice

Sitting content by the hearth
To whisper his history and thought.

Poet uncuckolded, he hears
No mad ethereal crying
For merciless cloud and ridge
Tormented by the golden horn.

Ah, she will never lift
Her intolerant head like a stag
And scorn him, thinking of wind
And naked hunter and his hallooing hound.

THE CHASTE LOVERS

Siberia is a land
Drops from a cloud.
The shackles click,
Yet never loud,

Upon a pavement
Of the frost—
A road we know,
Yet still are lost

Within the semblance
Of its cold
Mile after mile
Till we are old.

You and I, man and maid,
Together form
Procession or cavalcade
Minute as a worm.

Prisoners to each other,
And to these even less kind—
The bottomless beauty of body,
The bottomless pomp of mind.

And perpetually discontent,
We eye the crows,
Or watch the weasel where it went,
Or hail the wind that blows.

TO L. S.

I

O you
Wing-of-the-wind,
Why do you chant
Ree, ree, with the mourning-dove,
And dee, dee, with the male gannet—

When you may live forever
In the fray of her feathers,
And in the tumult of the dark wave
Where he pillows
In all weathers?

II

Why the perpetual sway
Of the air?
Why the rift of the heaven
Into light and dark,
Into black and white of division?

Women are deeper than sound.
They are the storm, which continues
In quiet, in peace, in sunshine,
Healing and building
In the air the airy sinews.

THE POET AT NIGHT-FALL

I see no equivalents
For that which I see,
Among words.

And sounds are nowhere repeated,
Vowel for vocal wind
Or shaking leaf.

Ah me, beauty does not enclose life,
But blows through it—
Like that idea, the wind,

Which is unseen and useless,
Even superseded upon
The scarred sea;

Which goes and comes
Altering every aspect—
The poplar, the splashing crest—

Altering all, in that moment
When it is not
Because we see it not.

But who would hang
Like a wind-bell
On a porch where no wind ever blows?

THE HUNTER

You asked me what I did
In peaked New Mexico,
Where lives the most wild beauty
To which a man may go.

And I answer that I pursued
Content that would go in a song
Upon its silvery mountains
So vainly and so long

That if it were bear or lion
Which I had hunted there
I should now be like Orion,
Fixed hungry in the air.

Glenway Wescott

NIGHT

NADIR

I am part of lonely things
Of this lonely city. . .

. . . . . .

A gold fish in a bowl,
Lowered into a lake,
Would feel the sleeping presence of fish
Even as I
Feel life withdrawn, suspended. . . .

An immanence of life,
Like a remembered song of violins
And oboes
After a dance.

. . . . . .

Even the sound of my footsteps
Dies in the snow.

SUMACH

An old monk is my night. . . .

Long ago he was young . . .
Song shone between his lips,
And a necklace of round white arms
Fulfilled his throat. . . .

Dried fruit of trees
That blossom in bitterness
Rustle on his bent shoulders . . .
Wry grey flesh festoons his yellow teeth. . . .

My night is old. . . .

BRACKISH WELL

If I were less than the sum of what I am
I wonder—

My eyes seek yours
Coaxing the flame—

If I were blind?

If I were dumb
And had no song?

Say you would love me
Blind and dumb—
Nothing to hold you,
Nothing to bind you to me.
Say you would love
My spirit . . .

I will say to you:
Go and love some puff of wind
From a graveyard.

ENDYMION

The universe
Crumbles away,
Crawls away . . .

A simoon
Keyed down,
Hushed away
To whispers. . . .

(Trickling, trickling—
Bare legs—
Impacts of sand-grains—
Impacts of girls' eyes—)

Up to my knees . . .

(Isolation
Of flesh from flesh—
Slippery, gritty,
Hands grip and slide,
Fingers roll
On my face—)

Knee deep,
Waist deep,
Eyes prickling . . .

(It was my gift
To catch their eyes,
Catch and hold their eyes:

She knew that,
But She could not blind
All their eyes—)

Waist-deep—
Up to my arm-pits. . . .

(She found one
Could keep my arms knit—
Body like a panther,
That one—)

Up to my eyes—
Sleep slides
Grain by grain. . . .

(What She did to you
No one knows. . . .
She'll never kill the feel of you
With Her sand—)

Crumbling,
Crawling,
Creeping—
Ring about my neck . . .

(Yours—
Your hands at my throat—
Your lips—)

John Crawford

DESCENT

It is large life to sit on the door-log
Of the Hill Tavern,
Among the distinguished birches
Standing in groups,
And look beyond the monotonous green floor
Of the matted tree-tops of the lower land
To the high horizon and the barges,
And the purple island in a ring of gold.

But I am of the lowland,
Of the undistinguished trees and juniper,
And must go down the deliberate trail
Of the undistinguished dead—
And no noon.

Below the bluff-rim—
The trees now are more separate
And individual of pattern;
But the dusk marries them to one another,
And their top branches intertwine,
Like parasols in a crowded park of listeners,
As far as the path leads to the valley terrace.
Then the black belt of tamarack
And tangled bittersweet
Is like the Lower Ten, leaning on brothers
To make stand against the uncertain winds,
And dying in the smother of a brief day.

Ivan Swift

Out of this and on the far side, I knew—
And the stranger would scarce surmise
And rarely venture—
The sun dances in golden tack-points
On the near, cool shallows of the sea.
The gray islands have gone down
Over the world's rim,
And the freight barges are companion buoys
Floating in pairs under thin smoke fans.
The ring of gold is at my feet, glistening!—
Washed clean by the white surf-reefs
Broken by the blue shadow of a gull.
A single tiger-lily
Flames in a whorl of beach-juniper.

Ivan Swift

AT NIGHT

Sometimes at night I hear the dark,
Wide and wind-shaken, calling me.
I should get up, and flying high
Above the tree-tops to the sea,
Scream till the waves scream back at me.

Marian Thanhouser

SPINNERS

SHE LONGS FOR THE COUNTRY

It is the May-time now,
And in a place I know
Some girl God will allow
To see the cowslips blow;

And the hyacinths, the fern
That grow by the riversides;
Narcissi, white and stern
Like sad unwilling brides.

Some other girl will run
And, dancing through the grass,
Will laugh in the wholesome sun,
And feel the sweet hours pass.

Laugh and be merry—oh,
Laugh! Laugh, and play for me!
Go where the sweet flowers grow,
And see what I cannot see!

THE SPINNERS AT WILLOWSLEIGH

The young girl passes by

The old women sit at Willowsleigh. They spin,
And shriek and sing above the humming din.

They are so very old and brown and wise,
One is afraid to look them in the eyes.

Their bony fingers make a chilly sound,
Like dead bones shaking six feet underground!

Their toothless singing mocks—they seem to say:
"What I was yesterday you are today;

Stars kissed my eyes, the sunlight loved my brow—
You'll be tomorrow what I am now."

They dream and talk—they are so old and lean;
And the whole world is young and fresh and green.

Once they were flowers, and flame, and livi ng bread;
Now they are old and strange, and almost dead!

The old women spin at Willowsleigh; they fool
And scold, and sleep. Once they were beautiful.

SONG OF A FACTORY GIRL

It's hard to breathe in a tenement hall
So I ran to the little park,
As a lover runs from a crowded ball
To the moonlit dark.

I drank in clear air as one will
Who is doomed to die,

Wistfully watching from a hill
The unmarred sky.

And the great trees bowed in their gold and red
Till my heart caught flame;
And my soul, that I thought was crushed or dead,
Uttered a name.

I hadn't called the name of God
For a long time;
But it stirred in me as the seed in sod,
Or a broken rhyme.

A SONG FOR VANISHED BEAUTY

The house is desolate and bare—
So long ago young Honora left
Her quiet chair!

Through the rose-bordered gardens, reft
Of all her pretty, tender care—
The silent hall, the lonely stair—

No one can see her anywhere.
Here is her shawl, her fan, her book—
She is not there.

No one remembers her bright hair,
Or how she looked, or when Death came.
Few can recall her name.

Where shall we turn to hope or look
For beauty vanished like an air?—
In what forgotten tomb or nook?

AN OLD TALE

What shall we say of her,
Who went the path we knew of? She is dead—
What shall we say of her?

Men who are very old
Still speak of her. They say
That she was far too beautiful; they say
Her beauty wrought her ruin. But they
Are very old.

The old wives break their threads, they shake their
heads.
They shake their heads when men will speak of her;
They say she was too beautiful.

I must not think of her, I must
Not speak of her! My mother says
One should not think of her.

She went the path we knew of; she is dead.
They say few knew her truly while she lived,
Though men will speak of her.

It really does not matter she is dead.
One need not think of her, although one night

Folks heard her weeping yet beside a pool
One moonlit springtime I could swear she sang!
But she is dead—one must not think of her.

MEMORIES

Lower New York City at noon hour

There is a noise, and then the crowded herd
Of noon-time workers flows into the street.
My soul, bewildered and without retreat,
Closes its wings and shrinks, a frightened bird.

Oh, I have known a peace, once I have known
The joy that could have touched a heart of stone—
The heart of holy Russia beating still,
Over a snow-cold steppe and on a hill:
One day in Kiev I heard a great church-bell
Crying a strange farewell.

And once in a great field, the reapers sowing
Barley and wheat, I saw a great light growing
Over the weary bowed heads of the reapers;
As growing sweeter, stranger, ever deeper,
From the long waters sorrowfully strong,
Came the last echoes of the River Song!

Here in this alien crowd I walk apart
Clasping remembered beauty to my heart!

Marya Zaturensky

CHARLES THE TWELFTH OF SWEDEN RIDES IN THE UKRAINE

Kings in old legends seem
Like mountains rising in the evening light.
They blind all with their gleam,
Their loins encircled are by girdles bright,
Their robes are edged with bands
Of precious stones, the rarest earth affords.
With richly jeweled hands
They hold their slender, shining, naked swords.

A young king from the North did fare,
Defeated in the Ukraine.
He hated springtime and women's hair
And the sound of the harps' refrain.
Upon a steel grey horse he rode,
And like steel was his grey eyes' glance;
Never for woman had they glowed,
And to none had he lowered his lance.
Never a woman his colors claimed,
And none to kiss him would dare;
For at times, when his quick wrath flamed,
A moon of pearls he would tear
From a coil of wondrous hair.
When seized by melancholy mood
He wreaked his will of a maid as he would,
And the bridegroom, whose ring she wore, pursued

Through the glade and across the heath
With a hundred hounds for many a rood,
Till he hunted him to his death.

He left his grey land dim and far,
Whose voice to him never spake;
And rode out under the thrall of war
And fought for danger's sake.
Now he seemed under a spell to ride,
Dreamily slipping his steel-gloved hand
Over his armor from band to band;
But found no sword at his side.
And then a miracle occurred—
A glorious vision of battle stirred
And fired his kindling pride.
He sat on his horse and glanced around—
No movement escaped him and no sound.
Steel unto steel in silver spoke,
Voices were now in everything;
Like many bells they seemed to ring
As the soul of each thing awoke.
The wind, too, stealthily onward crept
And suddenly into the flags it sprang—
Lean like a panther breathless leapt;
Reeling as blasts from the trumpets rang,
It wrestled and laughed and sang.
Then again it would softly hum,
As by some bleeding boy it would dart,

Beating a rally upon his drum,
Carried with uplifted head
Into the grave, borne like his heart
Before his battalions dead.
Many a mountain upward reared,
As though the earth not yet old had grown
But in the making still appeared.
And now the iron stood still as stone,
And then like a forest at evening swayed,
And ever the rising shape still neared
The army's mightily moving shade.
The dust rose up like vapors veiled;
Darkness, not of time, enveloped all,
And everything grew grey and paled,
And smoke rose up and fell like a pall;
Again flame broadened and grew bright,
And all was festively in light.
They attacked: the exotic colors reeled,
On swarms of fantastic provinces rode;
All iron with laughter suddenly pealed;
From a prince in luminous silver flowed
The gleam of the evening battle-field.
Like fluttering joys flags seemed to thrill,
Each gesture now showed the desire
To regally waste, to wantonly spill—
The flames leapt on far buildings, till
The stars themselves caught fire.

Night came. And the battle's surging range
Receded like a tired sea
That brought with it many dead and strange;
And all the dead lay there heavily.
The grey horse cautiously picked its way
Past great fists starkly warning it back;
In a foreign land the dead men lay
Where it stepped over grass that was matted and black.
And he who upon the grey horse sat,
Looked down on the colors moist and frayed,
Saw silver like shivered glass ground flat,
Saw iron wither, and helmets drink,
And swords stand stiff in the armor's chink;
Saw dying hands waving tattered brocade . . .
And saw them not.

After the tumult of battle he rode
Onward as though in a trance, alone;
And as with passion his warm cheeks glowed,
Like those of a lover his grey eyes shone.

Translated from the German of Rainer Maria Rilke
by Jessie Lemont

COMMENT

DANTE—AND TODAY

ON the fourteenth of this month Dante Alighieri will have been dead six hundred years. Therefore the whole world is thinking of him, and his spirit seems to be questioning the changes of six centuries, challenging modern civilization. Aristocrat and monarchist that he was, he was of too immense stature not to have deeply humane sympathies; his work was not for the elect—in his day the classically educated, but for the people of his time and tongue; and thus for the people of all times and tongues. Indeed, it is symbolically significant that the three greatest men in Italian literature—Dante, Petrarca and Boccaccio—wrote in the dawn of that literature, in what was called *il volgare*, the language spoken by the *volgo*, the people. Although this does not make of Dante a person of democratic tendencies, still it points out again that all great things have their foundations in the *volgo*, as all buildings in the earth.

Dante, Petrarca, Boccaccio: they embody the three traditions. Boccaccio was the artist who works to entertain and amuse his public. Among the thousands who follow this tradition are the buffoons, as Papini calls them, the souls sold to the public which the public buys with large sums. Petrarca is the delicate artist for whom only the inner world exists, in whose trail a thousand outcasts, egocentrics, morphinomaniacs, came; for whom

delicacy is not a luxury, as it is for the strong, but rather an incurable idiosyncrasy. Dante embodies the greatest tradition—that of those who through literature judge men and the times; besides being representative of that sturdy healthy beauty which has a greater claim on longevity.

Dante gathered, into what is perhaps the most powerful work of all literatures, all the history and philosophy, and part of the science of his time. He classified men and judged them; but his judgment is, like the history contained in the *Commedia*, essentially and terrifically mediaeval. A fierce god is this "merciful god" who gets a vengeance a thousandfold more terrible than the crime, than any crime. And a fierce little man it was who went wandering into hell, cursing each and all of the Italian cities, and several of the foreign ones, and their unfortunate inhabitants, for some slight reason or other. Today his ethics are dead: they are at best the skeleton around which the beautiful immortal flesh of Dante's words was cast. Dante's words—only an Italian, and a good Italian, may know the magical beauty of them! The poignant dramatic beauty of his *Conte Ugolino*, and the sweetness of his *Francesca*, and the marvelous images scattered throughout his work like pearls and diamonds over a gorgeous gown!

But, as I say, his ethics, like the history in his work, are past and dead. We know now that hell is not necessary—there is nothing so horrible that it may not be

found, at one time or another, upon the face of our earth. We have developed a philosophy which is more apt to give life all the credit due to life. We are waiting for the poet who will give us a *Divina Commedia* of our own times, but it is something entirely different from Dante's that we expect. A hell more terrific than the hell of Dante is the hell of modern warfare—an immense, eyeless, stupid machine that batters, mangles, crushes, distorts, tortures, crazes men. And, as if this were not terrible enough, men are studying how to contrive more terrible means to kill; and the next war, it is said, will be mostly a war of gas and germs! Henri Barbusse and Andreas Latzko gave us some horrible glimpses of the War. But they left still a great area unmeasured, an area perhaps immeasurable, perhaps impenetrable.

The world has become overcrowded: human beings are lost in it and nobody knows. This twentieth-century world erects horrible structures that look like skeletons—skeletons of a thing already dead, living now in hell. The mechanical cities loom like the menace of the future over our rivers: over and under them the continual uproar of locomotives, soul-rending, passes. Railways hold the earth in a terrible embrace. And the makers of these are business men who do not see, and workers whom a whirlwind sweeps into this modern tremendous factory, and leaves there like fledglings caught in the blast of an immense furnace. Out of this factory the human soul comes crushed—out of this factory of neurosis, the modern world. Ma-

chines and neurosis, out of this factory! The last trees are pushed farther and farther away by the oncoming cities. And there isn't a breeze but brings to them the feverish breath of the cities. Paradise might be the peace and the happiness that man has in spite of the world he himself builds.

This is Dante's challenge to a poet of today. Who will tune down this noise, arrange this turmoil, find one voice in this chaos of voices? His task will be a hundred times more arduous than Dante's. Dante's conception of his narrow world was centered around two main hypotheses —that of the absolute monarchy and that of the Roman Catholic power, the Pope. A modern poet would require, besides Dante's great genius, the energy to gather together in his thought a world which facility of transportation, and science in general, have made enormous.

The question as to whether a poet should be concerned in this great outer world, as opposed to the petty inner world of daily moods, cares, worries and affection, is a ridiculous question. And ridiculous is the thesis of the esthetic critic when he proposes that the individual who accomplishes the feat of expressing himself ably has thereby attained art: implying that a mole's observation of life is as valid as that of a soaring eagle who sees the world from above the horizons.

But there are still eagles: Walt Whitman, the multitudinous man, for whom the world was a purgatory of striving joy and self-redeeming pain—he enumerated, at

least, the modern world. And Verhaeren, with his *Villes Tentaculaires*, put down some of the horror of it. But it is either an *Inferno* only, or a *Purgatorio* or a *Paradiso* only, that the poets of the six centuries since Dante have accomplished. No one has attained Dante's completeness.

Emanuel Carnevali

JOHN ADAMS' PROPHECY

Not long ago *The Freeman* reminded us of a penetrating remark of old John Adams, first grand chief of the Adams clan and second president of the United States. Nay, not old; for he was only forty-five, and still seventeen years from the seat of Washington, when he wrote to his wife in 1780:

> I must study politics and war, that my sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history and naval architecture, navigation and commerce and agriculture; in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry and porcelain.

In 1780 America was quite innocent of art; or rather, such art as it had—colonial architecture, a few imported paintings, plays, poems—it took quite innocently, with abstemious discretion. And Adams, if not himself a thorough Puritan, was only four generations from that Henry Adams who, according to his tombstone in Quincy, "took his flight from the Dragon Persecution in Devonshire, England, and landed with eight sons near Wolleston." And the Puritan hostility to art and all its works—

was it not attested by the closing of theaters, the destruction of old churches, the sale of Charles I's collection to Spain, and other temporarily convincing devices to crush out the universal human instinct for creating beauty?

Therefore it is surprising to find this eighteenth-century wise man bequeathing the arts as a glorious heritage to his grandsons yet unborn, and feeling his own hard labors in the founding of a nation to be a mere preliminary to that end. Probably he never asked the much reiterated modern question, "What is art?"—never debated whether it was an iridescent rust of the mind, the beginning of disintegration; or a white-heat of creative energy, the fulmination of spiritual planets and moons, new dwellings for the soul of man.

The nation John Adams helped to found has passed on to the third or fourth generation beyond him without yet getting its machinery into such perfect running order as to free its citizens for the active and creative life of the spirit. There is plenty of machinery, but it proves cumbersome, it clogs. For few descendants of those nation-makers are capable of freedom; they are bound—hand, foot and spirit—to the machine; and their unconscious effort is to bind in the same fashion those who could and would be free, and thereby to conceal the evidence of their own slavery.

Probably each age has its due proportion of artists, actual or potential—that is, its due proportion of creatively imaginative minds. Even John Adams' time, though

barren in artistic product, was probably no more barren than any other in artistic impulse. Certain square-minded historians and critics are always talking of "great artistic periods" as if the artists who illuminate them were necessarily born in clusters; as if, between these clusters, nature must hold her breath in barrenness. There *are* great artistic periods, of course; but they arrive when the creative impulse in the few meets a sympathetic impulse in the many, when all things conspire to bring the artists together into emulative clusters, and make them freely expressive and productive. The great artistic periods come when the creatively imaginative mind finds all conditions urging him, compelling him indeed, to produce temples, songs, tales, murals, carvings of men and gods, rather than "politics and war", or even "mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history" and the rest.

The artist can not be born to order, nor ordered after he is born. Yet it is paradoxically true that only by the will of the people, his contemporaries and neighbors, can he come into his own.

When will the sons of John Adams will it?

H. M.

REVIEWS

GERARD HOPKINS

Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins (now first published) Edited, with notes, by Robert Bridges, Poet Laureate Humphrey Milford, London.

When the author's preface and the editor's notes are eliminated, we have here but a small volume of some eighty-five pages of poetry, and of these only a scant sixty-three consist of complete poems, the rest being fragments assembled from manuscripts in the Poet Laureate's possession. The majority of them date from the years 1876 to 1889; only three earlier poems are included. Hopkins is long in coming into his own; but it is not too much to say that his own will be secure, among the few that know, if not among the crowd, when many a Georgian name that completely overshadows him for the moment shall have become food for the curious.

For Hopkins' poetry is of the most precious. His voice is easily one of the half dozen most individual voices in the whole course of English nineteenth-century poetry. One may be repelled by his mannerisms, but he cannot be denied that overwhelming authenticity, that almost terrible immediacy of utterance, that distinguishes the genius from the man of talent. I would compare him to D. H. Lawrence but for his far greater sensitiveness to the music of words, to the rhythms and ever-changing speeds of syllables. In a note published in POETRY in 1914,

Joyce Kilmer speaks of his mysticism and of his gloriously original imagery. This mysticism of the Jesuit poet is not a poetic manner, it is the very breath of his soul. Hopkins simply could not help comparing the Holy Virgin to the air we breathe; he was magnificently in earnest about the Holy Ghost that

> over the bent
> World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

As for imagery, there is hardly a line in these eighty-odd pages that does not glow with some strange new flower, divinely picked from his imagination.

Undeniably this poet is difficult. He strives for no innocuous Victorian smoothness. I have referred to his mannerisms, which are numerous and not always readily assimilable. They have an obsessive, turbulent quality about them—these repeated and trebly repeated words, the poignantly or rapturously interrupting *oh*'s and *ah*'s, the headlong omission of articles and relatives, the sometimes violent word order, the strange yet how often so lovely compounds, the plays on words, and, most of all, his wild joy in the sheer sound of words. This phonetic passion of Hopkins rushes him into a perfect maze of rhymes, half-rhymes, assonances, alliterations:

> Tatter-tassel-tangled and dingle-a-dangled
> Dandy-hung dainty head.

These clangs are not like the nicely calculated jingling lovelinesses of Poe or Swinburne. They, no less than the impatient ruggednesses of his diction, are the foam-

flakes and eddies of a passionate, swift-streaming expression. To a certain extent Hopkins undoubtedly loved difficulty, even obscurity, for its own sake. He may have found in it a symbolic reflection of the tumult that raged in his soul. Yet we must beware of exaggerating the external difficulties; they yield with unexpected ease to the modicum of good will that Hopkins has a right to expect of us.

Hopkins' prosody, concerning which he has something to say in his preface, is worthy of careful study. In his most distinctive pieces he abandons the "running" verse of traditional English poetry and substitutes for it his own "sprung" rhythms. This new verse of his is not based on the smooth flow of regularly recurring stresses. The stresses are carefully grouped into line and stanza patterns, but the movement of the verse is wholly free. The iambic or trochaic foot yields at any moment to a spondee or a dactyl or a foot of one stressed and three or more unstressed syllables. There is, however, no blind groping in this irregular movement. It is nicely adjusted to the constantly shifting speed of the verse. Hopkins' effects, with a few exceptions, are in the highest degree successful. Read with the ear, never with the eye, his verse flows with an entirely new vigor and lightness, while the stanzaic form gives it a powerful compactness and drive. It is doubtful if the freest verse of our day is more sensitive in its rhythmic pulsations than the "sprung" verse of Hopkins. How unexpectedly he has

enlarged the possibilities of the sonnet, his favorite form, will be obvious from the two examples that I am going to quote. Meanwhile, here are two specimens of his more smoothly flowing verse. The first is from *The Leaden Echo*, a maiden's song:

How to keep—is there any any, is there none such, nowhere known
some, bow or brooch or braid or brace, lace, latch or catch or key
to keep
Back beauty, keep it, beauty, beauty, beauty, . . from vanishing away?
Oh is there no frowning of these wrinkles, ranked wrinkles deep,
Down? no waving-off of these most mournful messengers, still messen-
gers, sad and stealing messengers of grey?
No there's none, there's none—oh no, there's none!
Nor can you long be, what you now are, called fair—
Do what you may do, what, do what you may,
And wisdom is early to despair:
Be beginning; since, no, nothing can be done
To keep at bay
Age and age's evils—hoar hair,
Ruck and wrinkle, drooping, dying, death's worst, winding sheets, tombs
and worms and tumbling to decay;
So be beginning, be beginning to despair.
Oh there's none—no no no, there's none:
Be beginning to despair, to despair,
Despair, despair, despair, despair.

This is as free as it can be with its irregular line-lengths and its extreme changes of tempo, yet at no point is there hesitation as the curve of the poem rounds out to definite form. For long-breathed, impetuous rhythms, wind-like and sea-like, such verse as this of Hopkins' has nothing to learn from the best of Carl Sandburg. My second quotation is from *The Wood-lark*, a precious fragment:

Teevo cheevo cheevio chee:
Oh where, where can that be?
Weedio-weedio: there again!
So tiny a trickle of song-strain;
And all round not to be found
For brier, bough, furrow, or green ground
Before or behind or far or at hand
Either left, either right,
Anywhere in the sunlight.
Well, after all! Ah, but hark—
"I am the little wood-lark."

This is sheer music. The stresses fall into place with an altogether lovely freshness.

Yet neither mannerisms of diction and style nor prosody define the essential Hopkins. The real Hopkins is a passionate soul unendingly in conflict. The consuming mysticism, the intense religious faith are unreconciled with a basic sensuality that leaves the poet no peace. He is longing to give up the loveliness of the world for that greater loveliness of the spirit that all but descends to envelop him like a mother; but he is too poignantly aware of all sensuous beauty, too insistently haunted by the allurements of the flesh. A Freudian psychologist might call him an imperfectly sex-sublimated mystic. Girlish tenderness is masked by ruggedness. And his fuming self-torment is exteriorized by a diction that strains, and by a rhythmic flow that leaps or runs or stamps but never walks.

Here is *The Starlight Night*, one of his most characteristic sonnets—white-heat mysticism forged out of what pathos of sense-ecstasy!

Look at the stars! look, look up at the skies!
Oh look at all the fire-folk sitting in the air!
The bright boroughs, the circle-citadels there!
Down in dim woods the diamond delves! the elves'-eyes!
The grey lawns cold where gold, where quickgold lies!
Wind-heat whitebeam! airy abeles set on a flare!
Flake-doves sent floating forth at a farmyard scare!—
Ah well! it is all a purchase, all is a prize.

Buy then! bid then!—What?—Prayer, patience, alms, vows.
Look, look: a May-mess, like on orchard boughs!
Look! March-bloom, like on mealed-with-yellow sallows!
These are indeed the barn; within doors house
The shocks. This piece-bright paling shuts the spouse
Christ home, Christ and his mother and all his hallows.

"Ah well! it is all a purchase." You cannot have it for the asking.

And, finally, this other sonnet, addressed to his own restless soul, "with this tormented mind tormenting yet:"

My own heart let me have more pity on; let
Me live to my sad self hereafter kind,
Charitable; not live this tormented mind
With this tormented mind tormenting yet.
I cast for comfort I can no more get
By groping round my comfortless, than blind
Eyes in their dark can day or thirst can find
Thirst's all-in-all in all a world of wet.

Soul, self; come, poor Jackself, I do advise
You, jaded, let be; call off thoughts awhile
Elsewhere; leave comfort root-room; let joy size
At God knows when to God knows what; whose smile
's not wrung, see you; unforeseen times rather—as skies
Betweenpie mountains—lights a lovely mile.

But how many "lovely miles" could there have been

on the long, rocky road traversed by this unhappy spirit?

In face of this agonising poem one can only marvel at the Poet Laureate's imperturbable exegesis of the word "betweenpie":—"This word might have delighted William Barnes if the verb 'to pie' existed. It seems not to exist, and to be forbidden by homophonic absurdities." From our best friends deliver us, O Lord!

Edward Sapir

UNITY MADE VITAL

New Poems, by D. H. Lawrence. B. W. Huebsch.

The unimaginative person divides life, art, science, anything he is dealing with. He analyzes it, classifies it, puts it into compartments. The poet, on the other hand, is not interested in divisions so much as in unity, because unity is the aspect under which life presents itself naturally to any unbound creative spirit.

Probably there is no living poet whose perception of the unity of all things is keener and more profound than D. H. Lawrence. He goes further than Wordsworth and the romantic school. He goes further than the symbolists. His books give not only new pleasure, but, more than this, new light to the understanding.

Saturated with Pauline theology—as all of us who have studied English literature at all are bound to be—we are prone to draw distinctions between body and spirit, or even between mind and spirit, and to set one up as above the others. The lesser poet may as well accept the

distinctions: an artist like Mr. Lawrence abandons these. He sees all experiences fused into the indissoluble whole which is life.

> Nay, I persist, and very faith shall keep
> You integral to me. Each door, each mystic port
> Of egress from you I will seal and steep
> In perfect chrism. . . . . .
>
> So you shall feel
> Ensheathed invulnerable with me, with seven
> Great seals upon your outgoing, and woven
> Chain of my mystic will wrapped perfectly
> Upon you, wrapped in indomitable me.

The utter unity of art is brilliantly revealed in such a poem as *Flapper*, which cannot fail to suggest architectural method in its structure, and in its keeping of all ornament in inherent harmony with the line of structure.

> Love has crept out of her sealed heart
> As a field-bee, black and amber,
> Breaks from the winter-cell, to clamber
> Up the warm grass where the sunbeams start.
>
> Mischief has come in her dawning eyes,
> And a glint of colored iris brings,
> Such as lies along the folded wings
> Of the bee before he flies.
>
> Who, with a ruffling, careful breath
> Has opened the wings of the wild young sprite?
> Has fluttered her spirit to stumbling flight
> In her eyes, as a young bee stumbleth?
>
> Love makes the burden of her voice.
> The hum of his heavy, staggering wings
> Sets quivering with wisdom the common things
> That she says, and her words rejoice.

The ten-page preface to Mr. Lawrence's present volume is another witness to unity—a unity perhaps more far-reaching, more comprehensive, more marvelous, than has been suggested by the previous examples. In this preface the author points out that there are two types of poetry, that it is either "the voice of the far future, exquisite and ethereal, or the voice of the past, rich, magnificent". Both types possess an "exquisite finality, perfection which belongs to all that is far off".

The poet then turns to "the unrestful, ungraspable poetry of the sheer present, poetry whose very permanency lies in its wind-like transit". As the best example of this, he points to Whitman. Free verse, he says, is the norm of this "seething poetry of the incarnate Now", which is "supreme, beyond even the everlasting gems of the before and after".

In his discussion Mr. Lawrence uses with great effectiveness biologic and physical examples. Science and art may be popularly regarded as enemies. Mr. Lawrence does not attack science, he puts science into his pocket and walks off with it—a distinct achievement in the direction of unity.

So much has been written about Lawrence, intelligent readers know his work so well, that detailed discussion of his poems seems hardly in place. His *New Poems* has much the same qualities as his earlier volumes of poems. There is the same passion-filled, deep-running ardor, the same exactness of phrasing, the same fulness of conno-

tation, the same subtle rhythms. Places are much more extensively used as subject matter than in his previous books. The volume has not the emotional completeness of *Look! We Have Come Through*, but that is due to the plan of organic development followed in that work.

Nelson Antrim Crawford

YOUTH AND THE DESERT

The Bitterns, by Glenway Wescott. Monroe Wheeler, Evanston, Ill.

The Immobile Wind, by Yvor Winters. Monroe Wheeler.

These brief first books of two friends may naturally be reviewed together, since they are the product of sympathetic, though quite different, minds and temperaments working in the same tradition—the ultra-modern tradition of Ezra Pound, H. D., perhaps Carlos Williams and one or two others, and above all Wallace Stevens. The two young poets are both seekers of austere beauty in her remote cool haunts; and their Pegasus is reined in by a taut technique, which gives him order and direction but possibly too little freedom of movement.

Youth is so prone to prolixities and sentimentalities that the opposite excess is something of a relief—at any rate it may prove good discipline for young poets keenly strung and not less sensitive because they abhor facility. The temptations inherent in this compression are obvious —self-consciousness and what one might call a mannerism of tightness. In both these books one feels this strain

—one wishes that each poet would be less reluctant to speak out, to let himself go, to reveal his meaning with a less mystical air.

Mr. Winters' poem, *The Priesthood*, suggests the kind of austere beauty both these poets are aiming at:

We stand apart
That men may see
The lines about our eyes.

We perish, we
Who die in art,
With that surprise

Of one who speaks
To us and knows
Wherein he lies.

And Mr. Wescott, veiling a similar theme, says in his initial poem, *After-image:*

Oh I have never sought
This image of remembered fear
Which clings to the eye of thought.

I have desired rather to create
A balance of beauty as direct
As the hills above the cruel farms,
Or the two eyes of a fawn—

In ecstasy to separate
Wheat of memory from rust.
But trees by night lift heavy arms,
Or a hawk screams at dawn:

And my sight turns gray as dust.

Residence of a year or two in New Mexico has confirmed this austerity by adding its own stark discipline

of deserts, mountain spaces, and the art of primitive races. These poets may be cryptic, secretive; but they can not rival the desert in either of these qualities, nor yet in a certain harshness streaked with color. Mr. Winters' book has the feel of the desert in its title, *The Immobile Wind*, which no one who has been in those still spaces can question as paradoxical. This poet has experienced their gift of solitude; he is

> I, one who never speaks.

Again:

> On the desert, between pale mountains, our cries—
> Far whispers creeping through an ancient shell.

Indeed, the whole book is a voice from the desert, the expression of a spirit in intimate communion with it—a spirit proud and separate, who can say:

> I paved a sky
> With days.
> I crept beyond the Lie.

The reader may be left to his own interpretation of the more cryptic poems, including the *Two Dramatic Interludes for Puppets*. But even one who lives "in the greatest of our valleys" can hardly fail to get from this one, with its beautiful last line, a hint of desert grandeur and silence:

> Death goes before me on his hands and knees,
> And we go down among the bending trees.
>
> Weeping I go, and no man gives me ease—
> I am that strange thing that each strange eye sees.

Eyes of the silence, and all life an eye,
Turn in the wind, and always I walk by.

Too still I go, and all things go from me—
As down far autumn beaches a man runs to the sea.

My hands are cold, my lips are thin and dumb.
Stillness is like the beating of a drum.

Mr. Wescott's experience of the desert is less intimate and static. He has followed the trail—for him the desert moves:

The sun slides down:
I have not healed
My lame leprous day;
I am not swift enough to walk
From May to May.

Desert flows beneath my feet,
Drips out of the sky.
But I lie down beside content,
For victory is imminent.
Night opens her deep eye.

Indeed, the desert does not pervade this brochure of twelve poems. There is a hint of softer places and more personal emotions. Mostly however, it expresses youth's loneliness—perhaps the following poem is typical, in both mood and movement:

These are the subtle rhythms, rhythms of sloth:

Mountains which fall in the green swirls
Of twilight as petals, fallen and languid,
Bud in the dawn, and fall again
In the green swirls of twilight, a little
Nearer the stars and the flickering final fires.

These are the rhythms of sloth:
Mountains, my feet on the trails.

Enough has been quoted from these two poets to show with what studious insistence they work out their closely packed thoughts in rhythms of original and delicate beauty. If the effect is sometimes too tight, too squeezed, this may be the ardor of youth, which will yield its over-emphasis to time. Meantime these poets have struck out, each one, a new and personal tune. As Mr. Wescott sings,

> I, in my pitiful flesh
> Transfigured, have woven
> Music of wilderness.

H. M.

TWO ENGLISH POETS

The Waggoner, by Edmund Blunden. Alfred A. Knopf.
The Kaleidoscope, by Sherard Vines. C. W. Daniel, Ltd., London.

If these two English poets were dancing, I am sure one would do the foxtrot and the other the waltz. And I do not imply any lack of deference in using this analogy of another art.

Mr. Sherard Vines, the foxtrotter, would be playfully pagan with shoulders and feet; and Mr. Edmund Blunden, the waltzer, would glide smoothly and turn slowly: both with propriety. And just as the waltz is a more finished dance than the foxtrot, so Mr. Blunden's poetry is more polished than that of Mr. Vines.

I would recommend *The Waggoner* to all those who prefer the 1, 2, 3,—1, 2, 3 order of things. The poems are suave, smooth, and have music. They are very pleas-

ing to the senses, and leave the emotions unruffled. They are filled with soft alliterations, and the simple panaceas of "wood-fairies" and "trysts" and "lilied lakes", as well as more original ones:

> The wild-rose bush lets loll
> Her sweet-breathed petals on the pearl-smooth pool—
> The bream-pool overshadowed with the cool
> Of oaks where myriad mumbling wings patrol.

Frequently there are lines of arresting beauty:

> The feather-footed moments tiptoe past.
>
> Some bell-like evening when the may's in bloom.

And always Mr. Blunden is a sincere follower of the old English pastoral tradition. He has the same genuine appreciation and authentic knowledge of nature which inspired Wordsworth, George Crabbe, John Clare, and the eighteenth-century poets of rural life. *Sheepbells* is characteristic:

> Moon-sweet the summer evening steals
> Upon the babbling day:
> Mournfully, most mournfully
> Light dies away.
>
> There the yew, the solitary,
> Vaults a deeper melancholy,
> As from distant dells
> Chance music wells
> From the browsing-bells.
>
> Thus they dingle, thus they chime,
> While the woodlark's dimpling rings
> In the dim air climb;
> In the dim and dewy loneness,
> Where the woodlark sings.

Some of the poems are as coolly refreshing as their titles—*The Silver Bird of Herndyke Mill*, *A Waterpiece*, *Perch-fishing*, etc.—and all of them have a quiet charm. They tell of nature in her most gentle moods.

The range of Mr. Blunden's poetry is limited, but it is highly perfected.

Mr. Vines, on the other hand, springs fearlessly from one subject to another—starting with *Sunrise*, and going with breathless versatility to *The Gospel of Chimneys*, to *A Ballad of Judas*, to *Low Tide*, to *The Dying Bolsh*, and so on, concluding with *Anastasis*. He uses the direct appeal of human emotions, and hurls his observations on love, hatred, and despair with a brutal frankness:

> The cold! The ghastly cold,
> All colorless! The only color is
> My blood, like red wax from a guttering candle—
> (You know these red candles ladies use
> In piano brackets).
>
> Bitter wind,
> A draught blowing so shrilly through my wound,
> Blowing the life out, blowing the life out.

There are no sensuous cadences here, as in Mr. Blunden's poems; there is no beauty of wording: the effect is gained through a harsh simplicity, and the subject matter is always more unusual than the manner of expression. The poems are—to use the simile again—like the foxtrot, the modern dance: the dance that is primitive, virile, whimsical—pagan. The veneer of rhythm is strangely a part of, and at the same time incongruous to, the un-

conventional audacity of the ideas, like the harmony of discords in modern music.

Perhaps *Little Mother of Sorrows* is as good an example as any one poem may be:

Little mother of sorrows,
  What is her desire?
"Pence, to buy a drop of milk,
  And a few coals for a fire.

"My baby gets no milk from me—
  He's crying out for food.
I don't know who his daddy is,
  But one that was no good.

"Yes, sir, I used to walk the streets
  Before I got so ill;
And now I sell spring flowers or beg,
  Since there's two mouths to fill."

Little mother of sorrows,
  With holes in your thin shoes,
And little son of sorrows,
  With bare pink toes,

No one in the whole town
  Cares for you at all;
So go into the workhouse,
  Or drown in the canal,

The two poets, like the two dances, have found a dissimilar, yet each a merited recognition.

Marion Strobel

CORRESPONDENCE

CONCERNING AWARDS

My Dear Miss Monroe: Your comment on *The Dial's* generous offer of prizes, and your suggestion, repeatedly made, that poetry should be seriously recognized as a serious art in our country and encouraged and rewarded as such, are interesting.

Let me first, however, correct your statement about the recently won prizes offered for students in the Chicago Art Institute school. The prizes are larger than you stated. The French Memorial Prize is, I think, about $1,200, and the Bryan Lathrop Memorial Prize represents $800. They were not awarded to the two students, as you suggest, "for a couple of nice little academic bas-reliefs," but rather on the basis of these and all their school work during the past year plus their personal qualities; and the prizes are for definite study abroad. In these particular cases they were undoubtedly the culmination of three or four years of ardent work.

There is, so far as I know, no school for poetry excepting as your magazine, and perhaps to a less extent some others, afford an intelligent and discriminating outlet and opportunity to the young poets.

Could you devise and suggest some plan by which prizes would not be awarded for an individual poem, but based on broader considerations of personal production and talent, youth and need? An outline for such

a prize might be worth publishing in POETRY on the chance of its attracting the generous sympathy of some well-to-do reader. In the meantime let me repeat that POETRY is itself the best school and reward, so far as I know, which exists at the present time for young poets.

Arthur T. Aldis

Note by the Editor: One of POETRY's annual prizes conforms to our correspondent's suggestion—that of $100 "for a young poet," awarded last year and twice previously. This is not given "for an individual poem," but is "based on broader considerations of personal production and talent, youth and need." But we submit that there is a vast difference between this annual hundred dollars (not yet secured for this year, by the way) and those two far richer memorial prizes permanently endowed for the benefit of the Chicago Art Institute art school.

If anyone feels inclined to endow such a memorial prize in perpetuity for the benefit of young poets, the editor will engage to satisfy him as to the terms of such an endowment. Some trust company of proved reliability should be made custodian of such a fund, and a committee of prominent poets should administer it. The editor will be very glad of suggestions as to the best way of appointing and perpetuating such a committee, in order to keep it freshly authoritative and uninstitutionalized.

Those who are interested—and poets especially should be loyally interested—are requested to give this subject careful thought, and to send in their suggestions before September fifteenth, so that we may resume the subject editorially in our annual Prize-award Number in November.

NOTES

Paul Fort has been crowned *Prince des Poetes* in Paris, and has recently published, through Eugene Fasquelle, his twenty-seventh volume of verse, *Au Pays des Moulins*. Yet, though perhaps the most popular and prolific of French poets, he was little known in this country, if one may judge by slightness of sales and library circulation, until Amy

Lowell introduced him in her *Six French Poets*, to which volume the reader is referred for an intelligent presentation of the man and his art. *The Miraculous Catch* is partly quoted by Miss Lowell, and admirably translated into prose. But as she does not attempt to reproduce M. Fort's rhyme-scheme, with its chiming repetitions of sound not unlike her own polyphonic prose, we present Mr. Newberry's version in the hope that our readers will be interested to compare the two translations of a poem so deliciously and whimsically French in its mood and style—its manner of achieving a modern picture of a mediaeval scene.

M. Fort's series of Louis Eleventh poems, of which we present two, have been incorporated recently in a play which is to be produced at the Odeon in October. This autumn Mr. John Strong Newberry will publish, through Duffield & Co., his book of translations, under the title *Selected Poems and Ballads of Paul Fort.*

M. Fort was born at Rheims in 1872, directly opposite the Cathedral —now "*la Cathedrale assassinee,*" as he has called it since its destruction. For years he has lived in Paris. Miss Lowell speaks of his *joie de vivre*—"I know no one," she says, "except Sam Weller, who seems to me so bubblingly alive."

M. Fort's translator, Mr. John Strong Newberry, is a resident of Cleveland, Ohio.

Rainer Maria Rilke, the distinguished Viennese poet from whom we present a translation, was discussed by Padraic Colum in POETRY for June, 1919, in a review of a volume of the Lemont translations. "A mystic poet," Mr. Colum calls him, one "lonely amid the crowd."

Mrs. Jessie Lemont Transil, Rilke's very competent translator, is a resident of New York.

Of the American poets who appear this month for the first time:

Mr. Glenway Wescott, a native of Wisconsin and recently resident in Chicago and Santa Fe, is the author of *The Bitterns*, published by Monroe Wheeler and reviewed in this number.

Mr. John Crawford, a native of Arkansas and a resident of New York, has written for various papers—mostly prose criticisms.

Mr. Ivan Swift, a painter as well as a poet, is the founder of Chippewa Cove Woods, an artist colony near Harbor Springs, Mich., where he lives at least part of each year. He is the author of *The Blue Crane* (James T. White & Co.).

Miss Marian Thanhouser, formerly of Milwaukee, Wis., is now studying at the University of California in Berkeley.

The only poet of this month whom our readers have met before is Miss Marya Zaturensky—born in Moscow and resident in New York since she was brought to this country ten years ago. She has contributed verse to various magazines.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

Selected Poems, by William Butler Yeats. Macmillan Co.

The Living Frieze, by Mark Turbyfill. Monroe Wheeler, Evanston, Ill.

Commemoration and Other Verses, by Thomas Dwight Goodell. Yale University Press.

Poems, by Marianne Moore. The Egoist Press, London.

A Song of Faith, by Katherine Milner Peirce. Stratford Co.

Second April, by Edna St. Vincent Millay. Mitchell Kennerley.

ANTHOLOGIES:

Modern Czech Poetry, Selected Texts with Translations and an Introduction by P. Selver. E. P. Dutton & Co.

A Queen's College Miscellany, 1921, selected and edited by Edmund Blunden and Alan Porter. Oxford, England.

A Hundred Voices and Other Poems from the Second Part of Life Immovable, by Kostes Palamas. Translated with an Introduction and notes by Aristides E. Phontrides. Harvard University Press.

An Anthology of New English Verse, edited by Makoto Sangu. Osaka, Suzuya, Japan.

PROSE:

Paul Verlaine, by Harold Nicholson. Houghton Mifflin Co.

The Hound of Heaven: An Interpretation, by Francis P. La Buffe, S. J. Macmillan Co.

The Story of a Poet: Madison Cawein, by Otto A. Rothert. (Filson Club Publication No. 30.) John P. Morton & Co., Louisville, Ky.

DRAMA:

Body and Soul, by Elizabeth H. Marsh. Cornhill Co.

Your June number renewed me wonderfully—an absolutely joyous thing! Go to it, hammer and tongs! Infuse a little beauty, joy, spirit, pain into the life of today. Did I say a little?—Oceans of them!—*A Canadian subscriber*

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